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THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Department Memorandum LR 6/G of 1963 surveyed the Kurdish problem in Iraq from 1958 to 1963. The present memorandum examines developments since 1963.
2. The racial origins of the Kurds are obscure; they combine the physical characteristics of various races. Their language, however, is of Indo-European origin, bearing a close relation to Persian. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, although a few tribes are Shi'i. "Kurdistan" in its broadest sense means the territory inhabited by the Kurds as a homogeneous community. It is divided between Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with small overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union. In all the Kurds probably number between 6 and 7 million, including between 1 and 1½ million in Iraq, which, with a Kurdish minority of between 15 and 20 per cent of its total population, possesses the highest ratio of Kurds to non-Kurds. A hardy and

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dour mountain race, they have never been united politically as one people but have, except in the main towns, lived a tribal life with its attendant disputes and differing dialects and customs. Thanks in part to the mountainous nature of their terrain they have, particularly in Iraq, managed to maintain a large degree of independence from outside authority. In the tribal areas their basic desire is to be free to continue their traditional way of life - farming and herding - without outside interference. For the growing urban elements, however, and particularly the younger generation, the question of equality of opportunity within the States in which they live has become increasingly important in recent years. In Iraq the Kurds' demands therefore include both autonomy for the Kurdish region and equal rights with the Arab population of Iraq as Iraqi citizens. A desire for eventual independence and union with Kurds beyond the frontier cannot be excluded, but this is at present not a practical issue.

3. In Iraq during the period of British administration (1920-1932) some attention was given to the needs of the Kurds, but efforts to establish a special administration for Kurdish districts were hampered by a series of tribal revolts. When Iraq became fully independent in 1932 she made a formal declaration to the League of Nations guaranteeing the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. This

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guaranteed them equality before the law with other Iraqi nationals and stipulated inter alia areas in which Kurdish was to be an official language in addition to Arabic and in which officials should if possible be Kurds. It also promised the allocation of official funds for the provision of primary education in the Kurdish language. The Government, however, rather than honouring this declaration, concerned itself primarily with enforcing its authority in Kurdistan. Kurdish discontent led to a number of uprisings, the most serious of which was led by the tribal leader Mulla^{Mustafa} Barzani in 1943-1945. He was defeated by the Iraqi army, aided by tribes in Government pay, and fled to Iran, where he joined the short-lived Kurdish "Republic of Mahabad". After its collapse he made his way with a number of his followers to the Soviet Union.

4. When Qasim deposed the monarchy in 1958 he made the Kurds promises of equality with the Arab population of Iraq and allowed Barzani to return from exile. After an initial period of cooperation, however, Kurdish opinion hardened against the Government because of its neglect of their interests and its arming of tribes hostile to the Barzanis. In July 1961 the Barzanis took to arms and defeated these enemies.

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Supported by other tribes and by members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, they then proceeded to take over Government posts in the north. By the end of August the semi-circle of mountains from north-west of Mosul to south-east of Kirkuk was effectively under Kurdish control. Barzani then presented Qasim with a number of demands, including autonomy for the Kurds, to which Qasim replied by launching a full-scale military offensive against the Kurds in September. Hostilities continued intermittently until Qasim's fall in February 1963, neither side gaining a decisive advantage. The Government forces held the main towns in the north - Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimaniya - but the Kurds controlled most of the rest of their territory.

II. THE KURDISH WAR, 1963-1969

The 1963 Ba'athist campaign

5. Almost immediately after the Ba'ath Party came to power in February 1963 a ceasefire was arranged. Negotiations began in the following month, when it was announced that the Government were prepared to grant the Kurds "national rights on the basis of decentralisation". Kurdish demands for a

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share in oil revenues and other State revenues on a per capita basis and the exclusion of Arab troops from Kurdistan proved unacceptable to the Government and, although they made counter-proposals, it soon became apparent that the negotiations were not getting anywhere. In June the Government threw a Kurdish delegation into prison and launched a new military offensive. This was managed with more drive than had been displayed under Qasim, but by the time winter closed in the army had secured control of only a small fraction of the mountainous area of Kurdistan and it was evident that the Government had little hope of imposing a military solution.

The 1964 negotiations and Barzani's dispute with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani

6. In February 1964 a cease-fire was announced between the Kurds and the Government, which since the ousting of the Ba'ath in November 1963 had been Nasserist in complexion. An official statement by President Arif promised the Kurds national rights "in a single fraternal national unity", proclaimed a general amnesty, and pledged the Government to undertake the rehabilitation of the north and reinstate Kurdish officials and employees there.

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There followed innumerable visits to the north by Government representatives in an attempt to get the Kurds to accept something less than autonomy.

7. The Kurds themselves meanwhile split into two main factions. The first, led by Barzani, who was both the dominant tribal leader and Chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), took the view that every effort must be made to test the Government's sincerity and see whether an agreement could be reached. The second, a group of younger and more radically inclined KDP members led by Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani, early came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained from dealings with the Government. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the KDP in July 1964, when Barzani expelled 14 senior party members, including Ahmad and Talabani and all but one of the party's Politburo. After armed clashes between supporters of the two factions, Ahmad and Talabani fled to Iran with some 400 of their supporters.

The 1965 campaign

8. After more than a year of truce, marked by increasingly desultory negotiations, hostilities were resumed by the Government in the first week of April, 1965. By then most

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of the dissident Kurdish group had made their peace with Barzani and returned from Iran, though Ibrahim Ahmad remained there unreconciled and Talabani spent the summer abroad trying to rally international support for the Kurdish cause.

9. The 1965 campaign went no better for the Government than previous ones and by the end of the year it was once again evident that deadlock had been reached on the military front.

The Bazzaz proposals. 1966

10. Early in 1966 there were indications that Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, who in the previous autumn had been appointed Iraq's first civilian Premier since the 1958 revolution, was in favour of negotiating peace with the Kurds rather than mounting a new spring offensive. His advice was overruled and a new offensive began in May, but the Government forces almost immediately suffered a severe setback near Rowanduz and early in June the campaign was called off.

11. On 29 June 1966 Dr Bazzaz announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. His twelve points were, in summary:

(i) Equal national rights for Kurds and Arabs in Iraq.

(ii) Decentralisation: elected local assemblies to have wide powers.

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(iii) Kurdish to be recognised as an official language, side by side with Arabic, in areas where the Kurds formed a majority.

(iv) Kurdish representation in a National Assembly on a proportional basis.

(v) Public offices and appointments to be open to Kurds.

(vi) Equality of educational opportunity.

(vii) Local officials in Kurdistan to be Kurds.

(viii) A measure of political freedom and freedom of expression for the Kurds.

(ix) A general amnesty and reinstatement of Kurdish officials and employees.

(x) Kurdish members of the armed forces and police to report to their units. Others under arms to surrender their weapons.

(xi) Rehabilitation of the North.

(xii) Resettlement of displaced individuals and groups.

12. The impression created by this declaration was that it was a blueprint for an eventual settlement rather than a settlement in itself. Much of its phraseology was ambiguous and it left a great deal unsaid. It was felt, nevertheless, that as long as Bazzaz remained in office there was a fair chance of progress. The Kurds themselves seemed pleased with the

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proposals, which were officially welcomed by Barzani. By mid-July, however, they were becoming disillusioned by lack of any positive signs of implementation, and when Bazzaz was dismissed in August hopes of a settlement virtually disappeared.

Continued stalemate in 1967

13. Although full-scale hostilities were not resumed in 1966 or 1967, Government forces remained deployed in the north. The Government endeavoured to weaken Barzani's position by giving support to Talabani, who had again broken with him; sporadic armed clashes took place between the rival Kurdish groups, but Talabani's faction was too weak to present a serious challenge to Barzani's authority.

The return of the Ba'ath. 1968.

14. The Ba'athist Government which came to power in July 1968 did not at first show any sign of having better ideas on how to deal with the Kurds than those which the previous Ba'athist Government had had in 1963 or those which other administrations had applied in the interim. They thus continued the policy which they had inherited of containing the extent of the area controlled by the Kurds and supporting Talabani's faction with money and arms.

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15. After a time, however, they began to give effect to certain of the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966. Thus Kurdish was made the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish areas; a university was established in Suleimaniya; a Kurdish Academy of Letters was set up; an amnesty was declared for those who had taken part in the fighting; and a measure of decentralisation of power to the governorates was introduced. In spite of these propitiatory gestures, skirmishing continued throughout 1969.

III. THE MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT

16. In January 1970 it became apparent that serious negotiations were taking place between the Ba'ath and representatives of Barzani under cover of a de facto cease-fire. The successful outcome of these negotiations was announced by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council on 11 March. The terms of the announcement⁽¹⁾ followed fairly closely the proposals put forward by Dr. Bazzaz in 1966 and contained the following main points:

(1) For a more detailed text of the announcement see Annex.

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(i) The Kurds were to enjoy national rights and autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic. The areas of Kurdish autonomy were to be determined by an official census.

(ii) The existence of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd, was to be recognised in the Constitution.

(iii) A Kurd was to be appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

(iv) The Kurds were to share in the legislative power on a proportional basis.

(v) The Kurds were to participate in the Government and in Government departments without discrimination.

(vi) Officials in Kurdish areas were to be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language.

(vii) Kurdish and Arabic were both to be official languages in the Kurdish areas; Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in these areas.

(viii) All former Kurdish military and civil officials, students and workers were to be reinstated.

(ix) Educational and cultural facilities for Kurds were to be expanded.

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(x) The Kurds were to have their own organisations for students, youth, women and teachers, affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

(xi) Inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages were to be restored to their former homes.

(xii) Relief measures for Kurds affected by the hostilities were to be put in hand.

(xiii) A Kurdish development commission with an adequate budget was to be established and a special economic plan for the Kurdish region was to be prepared.

(xiv) Agrarian reform was to be speeded up in Kurdish areas.

(xv) The exploitation of national resources in the autonomous area was to be the responsibility of the Republican authorities.

(xvi) The Kurdish broadcasting station and all heavy weapons were to be surrendered during the final stages of the implementation of the agreement.

17. The published agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol containing the following provisions:

(i) A joint committee was to be set up to supervise implementation of the agreement.

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(ii) One of the tasks of this committee would be to resettle the Pish Merga (Kurdish rebel forces), whose number was to be reduced to about 6,000 men. During the period of resettlement, which would be in five unspecified stages, the Government would pay for the general upkeep of the force.

(iii) The Government would disarm and disband all Kurdish forces opposed to Barzani, and the Iraqi armed forces would withdraw to their "normal positions".

(iv) The KDP was to be allowed to operate freely in the Kurdish region and to publish its own newspaper.

(v) All persons formerly in Government service who took part in the Kurdish rebellion would be permitted to resume their employment without loss of seniority. Those who had served with the Kurdish armed forces would be permitted to count their service as if they had served in the Iraqi armed forces.

(vi) A nation-wide census would take place within one year to define the region of Kurdish majority.

(vii) Although the Iraqi national flag would not be altered immediately to incorporate a Kurdish symbol, this would be done as and when the flag was changed.

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18. Although the secret clauses went some way towards removing obscurities in the published terms, some important points, such as the exact nature of Kurdish autonomy and the amount to be allocated by the Iraq Government for the development of the Kurdish region, remained to be clarified; it was evident that further negotiation would be needed on these and other points before the settlement could be considered comprehensive.

19. Progress in implementing the agreement during 1970 was not speedy. The amnesty was generally observed, development activities began in Kurdistan, and a number of gestures were made by the Government in the cultural and educational fields. Five Kurds were appointed Ministers, but the promised Kurdish Vice-President was not appointed and the establishment of a National Assembly in which the Kurds might have proportional representation seemed as far away as ever. The Government kept their promise to withdraw their support from Kurdish forces hostile to Barzani and as a result Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad made their submission to Barzani, merging their "Kurdish Revolutionary Party" with the KDP. A number of the Pish Merga returned to their civilian occupations and a number were formed into a Kurdish frontier

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force under the Ministry of Interior, but Barzani retained some 20,000 men under arms and kept both his heavy weapons and his broadcasting station. (In March 1971 it was reported that he had handed them over, but in fact he retained the major part of his serviceable equipment.) The future of the KDP, which was among the questions not satisfactorily spelt out in the agreement, remained unresolved; declarations of its identity of outlook with the Ba'ath were issued from time to time but no practical relationship was forged. A clear-cut picture of future administrative arrangements within Kurdistan failed to emerge: there can be little doubt that by "autonomy" the Government meant no more than a modest measure of regional administration, whereas the Kurds intended it to mean a good deal more.

20. The all-important question of the physical extent of the area of Kurdish autonomy also remained unresolved. The published agreement promised a census to determine this, and the secret agreement stipulated that the census should take place within one year. It was later announced that it would take place in October, but shortly before the appointed date it was postponed sine die. The main difficulty concerned the status of the governorate of Kirkuk, which

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contains the main oil-bearing area of Iraq and has a mixed population of Turkomans, Kurds and Arabs. (The position is complicated by the fact that some Kurdish families left the area during hostilities and past Governments have settled Arabs in their place.) The Kurds, while accepting in March that the exploitation of the oilfields should be under the jurisdiction of the central Government, claim that Kirkuk is their capital and are not prepared to accept its exclusion from the autonomous region. The Government, for their part, could hardly be expected to accept a boundary which left the oilfields on the wrong side of the line from their point of view. Given the impossibility of the two sides coming to amicable agreement, it was perhaps as well in the short term that the census was shelved, since it would have excited passions on both sides and might have jeopardised the implementation of other parts of the agreement. In the long term, however, no settlement can be considered permanent until the territorial question is solved.

21. The postponement of the census did not seem to disturb the Kurds greatly. Their first priority was evidently to see that the Government went ahead with reconstruction and development in the north. As long as progress

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continues to be made in this and other fields they may be expected to continue the truce, though their patience may not be inexhaustible if the Government drag their feet. The Government, for their part, need the stability that a settlement could bring; it is noteworthy in this connexion that the political reputation of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the strong man of the Iraqi Ba'ath, is linked to the March agreement, for it was he who engineered it in the face of considerable opposition from within the party. But in the light of past experience it would require considerable optimism to predict that the two sides will manage to settle all their differences. For the immediate future the probability is that the truce will continue to be observed without significant progress being made on the major issues outstanding.

IV. POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH REVOLT

Political

22. Since 1961, when Barzani established himself as the dominant tribal leader and the KDP joined forces with him, the Iraqi Kurds have presented a more united front than during previous revolts. The feud which has

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continued on and off since 1964 between Barzani on the one hand and Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad on the other, however, is a symptom of the difference of outlook which separates the tribal population of the mountainous north from the urban population of the south of Kurdistan and the intellectuals in Baghdad and elsewhere. As long as the settlement remains incomplete and Barzani remains in reasonable health - he is now nearly 70 years of age - his position as the overall leader of the Iraqi Kurds is unlikely to be challenged, but if a lasting peace is made serious divisions within the Kurdish ranks are likely to reappear. The tribal leaders, who will not necessarily remain united among themselves, will naturally wish to see their authority being maintained in Kurdistan, whereas the more radical elements will want to see the KDP playing a dominant rôle in the administration of the area and pursuing progressive policies, including social and agrarian reform. In the long term the intelligentsia could find that they have more in common with the Arab socialists in Baghdad than with their own tribal kinsmen, as Talabani's separate dealings with the Baghdad authorities have already suggested.

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23. Since the KDP is the only Kurdish political organisation in Iraq, any future power struggle within the Kurdish movement is likely to centre on it. It does not possess any coherent ideology, having functioned largely as a resistance movement since 1961 and been almost completely subordinate to Barzani since 1964. In the last elections to the party's central committee, in July 1970, the Right wing came out on top, but the firmer peace becomes the more the radical elements are likely to make their influence felt.

24. In the early days of Qasim's rule the KDP associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, but in 1960 the party was purged and since then Communist influence within it has been negligible. (The story might have been different if the Soviet Union had given it more support.) A number of members of the Committee for the Defence of Kurdistan (the Kurdish students' association in Europe) have Communist leanings, but they are not in the mainstream of the Kurdish movement, which is essentially nationalist and opportunist in character.

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Military

25. The Kurdish rebel forces (Pish Merga) number some 25,000 when fully mobilised. Arms in their possession include rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, and some artillery pieces. They also possess radio equipment and some motor transport. A substantial proportion of their small arms have been captured or stolen from the Iraqi army. Most of the rest, and the majority of their heavier weapons, were supplied by Iran and Israel between 1963 and 1966. They may also have received some arms from Czechoslovakia, but not on the same scale.

26. The Pish Merga are reportedly divided into major units about 2,000 strong, recruited on a local basis and enjoying a great deal of independence. Because of their regional nature these units lack mobility and their activities are not fully coordinated, though a degree of central control is exercised by Mulla Mustafa Barzani as Commander-in-Chief and the small groups used for commando activities are extremely mobile considering the nature of the terrain. Barzani himself, who has round him what are probably the crack Kurdish troops, is constantly on the move during hostilities in order to escape detection.

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27. Kurdish military organisation seems to have improved considerably between 1963 and 1966 as the result partly of Israeli instruction and partly of an influx of Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi army. The Kurds have employed guerrilla tactics with fair success, not attempting to hold towns but drawing the Iraqi army on into the mountains and harassing it there. Ground lost in the summer has usually been regained in the winter, when snow and rain present the Government forces with severe difficulties. For the Kurds the war has been essentially a defensive one, aimed partly at keeping open their supply routes from Iran. They have not taken advantage of every opportunity to discomfit the Iraqi army; nor have they made as much use as they might of the weapon of sabotage, to which the oil installations in the Kirkuk area in particular are extremely vulnerable (see paragraph 41 below). The fact that fighting has mostly taken place in the hills and no attempt made by the Kurds to occupy major towns has suited Barzani in that as long as the fighting was in tribal territory he could fairly claim that the administration should remain primarily tribal in structure.

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V. ATTITUDES OF REGIONAL COUNTRIES
TO THE KURDISH PROBLEM

Syria

28. In 1963, when Ba'athist régimes were in power in both Baghdad and Damascus, the Syrians sent about two brigades of troops openly to Iraq to assist in the Kurdish war (though not in the front line). Since 1963 the two countries have not been on good terms and Syria has pursued a policy of non-involvement in the dispute. Syrian Kurds are thought to have helped their Iraqi brethren financially and there has been some coming and going over the Syrian border during hostilities, but the Syrian authorities have kept a fairly tight rein on Kurdish activities. Kurdish nationalism is no longer considered a live issue within Syria, the Kurds there being too few to carry much weight (about 300,000).

Turkey

29. Turkey has not involved herself openly in the dispute but is believed to have supplied the Iraqi Kurds with modest amounts of provisions, clothing and medicine. She has also relaxed controls on the Iraqi border during hostilities. She would probably welcome a permanent settlement in Iraq as it would mean greater stability on her south-eastern border, where the Iraqis

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have sometimes accidentally dropped bombs intended for their own Kurdish rebels. Attention was drawn to Turkey's own Kurdish problem in April 1971, when one of the reasons given by the Turkish Government for imposing martial law was the threat of a Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey, where the Kurdish population numbers some 3 million. (They indicated in confidence that trouble among the Kurds, particularly the students, was being directed from East Germany.) At a press conference on 1 May, however, the Prime Minister said that the threat was potential rather than actual and that the imposition of martial law allowed the security forces full control of the situation.

Iran

30. It is believed that the Kurds received financial aid from the Iranian Government in Qasim's time and that some Kurds were given training in heavy weapons units of the Iranian army.

31. Iran's distrust of the Ba'ath Government and of its dealings with Nasser led her to increase her aid to the Kurds substantially in 1963, though the Shah resisted the temptation to declare open support for their cause. Since 1963 Iran has been the Kurds' most important ally, supplying them with arms and other equipment, provisions, cash, training,

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and rear communications. Iranian aid is one of the "open secrets" of the Middle East and has frequently been referred to by the Shah in private as his "Kurdish card" in terms of his relations with the Iraq Government. Although by supporting Barzani he risked stimulating the ambitions of Iran's own Kurdish population and provoking Iraq to retaliatory measures in the Shatt-al-Arab and Khuzistan, he felt that he could not let slip such an opportunity to embarrass and weaken the Iraq régime. He also saw his action as pre-empting Soviet involvement with the Kurds; Soviet support for them had been limited almost entirely to verbal support in Qasim's time, but in view of the extreme antipathy of the Soviet Union to the Ba'ath régime there were widespread fears that it might take on a more substantial form and threaten the security of other countries in the area as well as Iraq.

32. The Iraq Government have on several occasions complained to Iran about her support for the Kurds, notably in January 1966 when the Iraqi garrison at Panjwin was cut off by the Kurds and subjected to artillery bombardment. They then accused Iran both of supplying the Kurds with arms and of allowing her territory to be used for mounting the bombardment. The Iranian Government rejected the charges.

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33. In addition to supplying aid of their own, the Iranians have allowed Israel to send aid to the Iraqi Kurds via their territory. Most other aid, including Red Cross aid, has also been delivered through Iran.

34. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq and, if implemented, will increase Iraq's ability to cause her trouble in return. She can therefore be expected to work against it if possible, but she has no real influence over Barzani and cannot force him to take up arms again.

35. Iran herself has a Kurdish population of about 1½ million. It is unlikely that the achievement of autonomy of a kind by the Kurds in Iraq would have serious repercussions among them as the Kurds generally feel themselves closer to the Persians than to the Arabs and those in Iran have by and large received tolerant treatment at the hands of the authorities during the last decade. Kurdish areas were among the first to benefit from the Iranian land reform programme, which was not, however, rigorously enforced in tribal areas.

Israel

36. Israel has supplied arms covertly to the Kurds since at the latest 1964, sending them by way of Iran with the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. She has also provided military advisers, training for Kurdish

officers, and some cash. Her aim has been to weaken the Iraq Government generally and, specifically, to tie down in northern Iraq troops which would otherwise be available for hostilities against her. She is thought to have supplied rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Her aid is a better kept secret than that of Iran but is known to the Iraqi authorities and has sometimes been the subject of speculation in the press, in the Arab world and elsewhere.

VI. ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND
COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

37. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and has criticised successive governments there for their treatment of the Kurds. The degree of her criticism has tended to vary according to her opinion of the government of the day. Thus when the Ba'ath Government, which was strongly anti-Communist, renewed hostilities against the Kurds in 1963 the Soviet Union whipped up a violent propaganda campaign against it and threatened to raise the Kurdish question at

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the UN Security Council. At the same time Mongolia, probably at Soviet bidding, requested that an item accusing the Iraq Government of genocide be included in the provisional agenda of the UN General Assembly. (Neither initiative came to anything because of lack of support from Afro-Asian members and Soviet reluctance to alienate Arab opinion.) In 1965, in contrast, when the Soviet Union was on more friendly terms with the Baghdad Government, Soviet propaganda was pitched in a low key and no move was made to bring the question before the United Nations.

38. Although the Kurdish problem presented the Soviet Union with an opportunity to fish in troubled waters - support for the Kurds in Iraq could have led to subversion of the Kurds in Iran, Turkey, and elsewhere - she made little use of this opportunity during the period under review because of the overriding importance which she attached to her relations with the Iraq Government and the Arab world as a whole. While providing the Iraqi Kurds with moral support and a certain amount of financial assistance, she and other Communist countries have given them little else in the way of aid, though there have been unconfirmed reports of Czech arms being delivered to Barzani by way of Eastern Turkey and the Soviet Red Cross is known to have sent him some provisions, clothing and medicine.

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VII. ATTITUDE OF HMG

40. During the period under review HMG's policy concerning the Kurdish question continued to be one of non-involvement. The public position was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in Parliament in June 1965, when he said: "HMG regret the fighting in Kurdistan, as any other instability in the Middle East, but we regard the Kurdish question as an internal Iraqi matter in which it would be inappropriate for us to interfere". In private, HMG have on appropriate occasions urged both sides to reach a peaceful settlement.

41. The Kurdish dispute is of special concern to HMG in that the installations of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), in which Shell and BP both have a 23.75% interest, are extremely vulnerable to Kurdish attack. In Qasim's time the Kurds shrank from sabotage, except of a very minor nature, but abducted two IPC employees in 1962 in a successful attempt to gain publicity. During hostilities in 1963, 1965 and 1966 there were a few more minor incidents of sabotage, some of which may have been intended as a threat of more serious action. Fears of major sabotage, however, proved groundless, seemingly because the Kurds

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did not wish to alienate Iraqi or Western opinion or destroy what they hoped would one day be the major source of their own income. The most serious incident in the history of the dispute took place in 1969, when damage to installations in Kirkuk caused by mortar fire affected operations for more than a week. All in all, the Kurds seem to represent the least of the threats to the supply of oil from Iraq.

42. Another way in which the Kurdish revolt has touched on HMG's interest is that the deployment of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan has reduced Iraq's capability to attack Kuwait or operate elsewhere in the Gulf. This consideration has not provided adequate grounds for contemplating active support for the Kurds, which would have jeopardised HMG's considerable political and commercial interests in Iraq and caused anxiety in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. (Since the March 1970 agreement some redeployment of the Iraqi Army has in fact taken place, giving rise to anxiety in Kuwait in particular.)

43. While HMG have given over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, the humanitarian consideration that arms might be used against Kurdish

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civilians has at times been an inhibiting factor in their policy on arms supplies to Iraq. Thus in 1963 HMG decided to phase the delivery of rockets, mortar bombs and other ammunition ordered by the Iraq armed forces, and a similar decision was taken with regard to the supply of ammunition and rockets in 1964. But HMG have never actually refused to supply any arms because of Kurdish considerations; other factors, particularly the possibility of weaning Iraq away from dependence on Soviet military supplies, have been considered more important.

44. HMG's policy of non-involvement has not stood in the way of cautious contact with the Kurds, with whom it has been felt desirable to keep on as good terms as possible within the limitations of the situation. In London, Kurdish emissaries have been received by members of the FCO outside the office on an unofficial basis. In Baghdad, paradoxically, dealings have tended to be less circumspect because many Kurds in touch with rebel groups have been allowed to circulate freely and have even participated in the Government. At other posts Kurdish emissaries have been received if they have requested interviews; letters for the Prime Minister or other Ministers have been accepted and forwarded to the FCO, but it has been

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customary not to give a written acknowledgement or send a reply.

45. The activities of Kurdish emissaries in London have on occasion evoked protest from the Iraq Ambassador - notably in 1965, when Jalal al Talabani appeared on BBC television. The question of granting visas to them has been reviewed on a number of occasions. The policy has been to issue visas, but sometimes to accompany their issue with an (unenforceable) request that the applicant should not take part in political or propaganda activities which might be embarrassing to HMG.

46. Despite HMG's policy of non-involvement, the Iraq Government have tended to suspect Britain of supplying the Kurds with aid in cooperation with Iran. (The fact that both are members of CENTO has lent colour to this myth.) In August 1965 the Iraqis claimed to have concrete evidence of this in the shape of arms and ammunition captured from the Kurds. Details of the items which were later furnished were insufficient to enable identification of the ammunition, but it was considered likely that the Kurds had captured it from the Iraqi army in the first instance. HMG gave Iraq an assurance that they had not supplied arms to the Kurds.

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47. HMG were reluctant to agree to numerous requests from Iraq between 1963 and 1966 that they should bring their influence to bear on the Shah to stop his aid to the Kurds; it was felt that there was a likelihood of causing irritation without affecting Iranian policy. On one occasion in 1965, however, HMG did undertake to transmit representations on behalf of the Iraqis, without entering into the merits of the complaint; and in January 1966, when a series of border incidents connected with the Kurdish war had created extreme tension between Iran and Iraq, HMG counselled moderation on both Governments at each other's request, but in a low key. Circumstances have not been comparable since.

48. The last occasion on which the Kurdish question was raised in Parliament was in December 1969, when it was asked whether HMG would seek to raise at the UN Human Rights Commission the dangers to peace in the Middle East arising from "the bombing and atrocities against Kurds carried out by the Iraqi Government". The Minister of State for the FCO replied: "No. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for HMG to take the initiative in this matter at the UN.

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Our attitude towards action at the UN, were this subject to be raised in the Human Rights Commission, would depend on the case that is presented." This reply was in accordance with HMG's policy of non-involvement in the Kurdish dispute. It did not, however, rule out in principle the discussion of the question by the UN because HMG consider that where a consistent pattern of violations of human rights, in the sense of a general policy, is alleged to exist the UN can legitimately consider the situation even though the allegation concerns an internal matter of a Member State. (Anything falling short of a consistent pattern, or a general policy, is probably covered by the domestic jurisdiction of the UN Charter (Article 2(7)), except where an individual instance of violation is part of a general policy.) In 1963, when Mongolia requested that a charge of genocide be brought against the Iraq Government, but later dropped the request, HMG similarly did not have to commit themselves on the question, but it was felt within the Foreign Office at that time that Iraqi methods, including the bombing of Kurdish villages, had exceeded purely military requirements and might sustain a charge of a deliberate attempt to destroy the Kurds as a race.

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49. HMG's policy of non-involvement has meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid, except that since the March 1970 settlement it has been agreed to award some technical assistance fellowships to Kurds through Iraq Government channels.

VIII. ~~SUMMARY AND~~ CONCLUSIONS

50. The period 1963-1966 was marked by annual hostilities between the Kurds and the Iraq Government, except in 1964, when abortive negotiations took place. During this period the Kurds received substantial military aid from Iran and Israel.

51. The proposals put forward by Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz in June 1966 raised hopes of a settlement, but these were dashed when he was dismissed in August 1966. Limited hostilities continued until March 1970, when a settlement was announced. Some progress has been made in implementing this settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Pish Merga and the KDP, have yet to be resolved in detail. There is thus a long way to go before the settlement can be considered permanent.

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52. It is to the advantage of nearly all that the settlement should be lasting. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house as long as the Kurds are in rebellion. For HMG, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

53. The reverse side of the coin is that with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country Iraq will be freer to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf, or on the Israeli front. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it a potential threat to stability in other parts of the Middle East. It is least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraq régime, and Kuwait, who fears Iraq's territorial ambitions.

54. It is unlikely that the granting of autonomy of a kind to the Kurds in Iraq will have serious repercussions among the neighbouring Kurdish populations in Iran and Syria, but the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in Turkey in April 1971.

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55. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as that of Iraq herself. But she chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world and has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She probably played some part in promoting the 1970 settlement.

56. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

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ANNEX

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL, 11 MARCH, 1970.

(The declaration begins with a long partisan review of the history of the Kurdish question and lists those measures taken by the Ba'athist régime in the last 18 months which, it claims, laid the foundation for the present agreement with the Kurds. What follows is a verbatim translation of the rest of the declaration.)

The Revolutionary Command Council initiated contacts with Mustafa al Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which led to an exchange of views. Both sides became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this declaration.

The Revolutionary Command Council reaffirms its determination to deepen and expand all effective measures to achieve cultural and economic development in the Kurdish area, seeking first of all to enable the Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and to ensure that they participate in a practical way in the earnest endeavours to build a homeland and the struggle to fulfil its great national aims. The Revolutionary Command Council has therefore reached the following decisions:

1. The Kurdish language shall be with Arabic the official language in areas populated by the Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic shall be taught in all schools where Kurdish is the language of instruction while Kurdish shall be taught in schools throughout the remainder of Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.

2. The participation of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between Kurds and others in filling public offices including sensitive and important posts in the State, such as Cabinet Portfolios, Army Command, etc. These have been and will remain among the important objectives which the revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. In recognising this the revolutionary Government stresses the necessity of achieving an equitable ratio in such appointments with due regard to efficiency, the proportionate distribution of the Kurdish population and the inequities which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past.

3. In view of the cultural and educational backwardness of the Kurdish population, a plan will be drawn up to make good this backwardness by:

(a) Hastening implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people and delegating to the Directorate-General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and directing radio and television programmes on Kurdish national issues.

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(b) Reinstating, regardless of age, all students expelled or compelled to leave school because of the conflict in the area; failing reinstatement, to find appropriate solutions in individual cases.

(c) Building more schools in the Kurdish area. Raising the standard of education and admitting students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and scholarships in numbers proportionate to the Kurdish population.

4. In the administrative units in predominantly Kurdish areas officials shall be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language provided that the required number is available. Principal officials (Governor, Qaimaqam, Director of Police, Director of Security, etc), will be appointed and immediate action will be taken to set up Government machinery in the area in consultation with the High Committee established to supervise the implementation of this statement; this to be carried out in a manner which will strengthen national unity and the stability of the area.

5. The Government recognises the right of the Kurdish people to set up their own organisations for students, young people, women and teachers which will be affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

6. (a) The operative period of paragraphs 1 and 2 of RCC decision No 39 of 5 August, 1968 (this granted amnesty to all those involved in the Kurdish fighting up to that date) shall be extended up to the date of issue of this statement and shall extend to all those who participated in the conflict in the Kurdish area.

(b) Workers, officials and employees, both civilian and military, shall return to service irrespective of establishment. Civilians may be employed in the Kurdish area according to requirements.

7. (a) A committee of experts shall be set up to supervise the general development of the Kurdish area and to arrange compensation for the setbacks of recent years. An adequate budget is to be allocated for this purpose. The committee in question shall come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Northern Affairs.

(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up to ensure balanced development throughout Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

(c) Pensions shall be paid to the families of those members of the Kurdish armed movement and others martyred during the past regrettable hostilities; pensions will also be paid to those disabled or deformed as a result of the fighting. Special legislation will be enacted to implement this on the lines of the laws currently in force.

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(d) Immediate action will be taken to relieve hardship by implementing housing projects, providing appropriate aid in cash and in kind and by arranging through the High Committee for the appropriate compensation to those in need who are not covered by the provisions of the paragraphs above.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former homes. The inhabitants of villages in areas not designated for habitation and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and properly compensated.

9. The Agrarian Reform Law shall be quickly implemented in the Kurdish area and amended in such a way as to guarantee the end of the feudal system and the acquisition by the peasants of suitable plots of land. Taxes on such land which accumulated over the period of the conflict shall be waived.

10. It has been agreed that the Interim Constitution shall be amended as follows:

(a) The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

(b) The following paragraph shall be added to Article 4 of the Constitution:

"The Kurdish language shall be, with Arabic, the official language in the Kurdish area."

(c) The above will be incorporated into the permanent Constitution.

11. The (Kurdish) broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be handed over to the Government. This to be done when the final stages of the agreement are implemented.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

13. The Governorates Law shall be amended to conform with the substance of this statement.

14. Following the publication of this statement the necessary measures shall be taken in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units in areas populated by a Kurdish majority; these areas to be decided by an official census yet to be carried out. The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the

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Kurdish people's exercise of all their national rights as a guarantee of their enjoying autonomy (al-hukm adh-dhati) within the wider national unity. Until this administrative unity is achieved Kurdish national affairs shall be co-ordinated by periodic meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As autonomy is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic the exploitation of natural resources in the area will naturally fall under the jurisdiction of the Republican authorities.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a ratio corresponding with their proportion of the Iraqi population.

(The declaration concludes with general exhortations.)

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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

SUMMARY

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq number between 1 and 1½ million, or between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population. There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued. (Paragraphs 1-5)

2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965. (Paragraphs 6-10)

3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr. Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded. (Paragraphs 11-13)

4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, ^{including} ~~including the precise extent and~~ ~~the boundary of the~~ ~~autonomous region and the exact nature of Kurdish~~ autonomy, remain unresolved. (Paragraphs 17-22)

Apart from tribal rivalries,

5. ^a division exists within the Kurdish ranks between the tribal elements led by Barzani and the Left-wing urban elements represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. Talabani and Ahmad were expelled from the Kurdish Democratic Party in 1964 and since then Barzani's authority has been supreme; but ^{if} ~~the former~~ peace becomes ^{firm} ~~the more~~ radical elements are likely to ~~be~~ make their influence felt again. (Paragraphs 23-26)

6. Organisation of the Kurdish army. It has employed guerrilla tactics with success. (Paragraphs 27-29)

7. Attitudes of regional countries. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who with a Kurdish population of some 3 million have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance in order to weaken the Iraq Government and, originally, in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds. Israel
/has

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<p>has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret. (Paragraphs 30-38)</p> <p>8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid. (Paragraphs 39-41)</p> <p>9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain ^{Britain} was because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; ^{however,} the reverse side of the coin ^{is} that a settlement of the Kurdish dispute would leave the Iraqi army free to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf ^{area.} and elsewhere. While HMG have attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces because of the possibility that they might be used against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have suspected HMG of supplying the Kurds with arms in cooperation with Iran. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">/relevant</p>		

relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place. (Paragraphs 42-51)

10. Conclusions. There is a long way to go before the 1970 settlement can be considered permanent and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the pace of its implementation is growing. Although it is to the advantage of nearly all that the settlement should endure, the fact that this would leave the Iraqi armed forces free to indulge in foreign adventures carries with it a potential threat to stability in the Persian Gulf area. (Paragraphs 52-55)

~~ANNEX:~~
Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March, 1970.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Department Memorandum LR 6/⁹/_AG of 1963 surveyed the Kurdish problem in Iraq between 1958 and 1963. The present memorandum examines developments since 1963.

2. In all the Kurds probably number between 6 and 7 million. Their racial origins are obscure; they combine the physical characteristics of various races. Their language, however, is of Indo-European origin and bears a close relation to Persian. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, although a few tribes are Shi'i. A hardy and dour mountain race with a reputation for brigandage, they have never been united politically as one people, but have mostly lived a tribal life with its attendant disputes and differing dialects and customs. "Kurdistan" - the territory inhabited by them as a homogeneous community constituting the majority of the population - is at present divided between Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with small ~~overlaps~~ /overlaps

overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union.⁽¹⁾

3. In Iraq the Kurds number between 1 and 1½ million and constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population - a larger percentage than in any other country. Thanks partly to the mountainous nature of their terrain, they have managed to maintain a large degree of independence from the central Government. In the tribal areas their basic desire is to maintain this independence and to be free to continue their traditional way of life - farming and herding - without interference. For the ~~growing~~ urban ~~element~~ elements, however, which now make up about a quarter of the Kurdish population in Iraq, the question of equality of opportunity within the Iraqi State has become increasingly important in recent years. The Iraqi Kurds' demands therefore include at one and the same time autonomy for the Kurdish region and full rights ^{for themselves} ~~for Kurds~~ as Iraqi citizens. ~~Some of them~~ ~~also dream of union with their brothers beyond~~

~~the / the~~

(1) The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) envisaged the setting up of an autonomous Kurdistan, but was never ratified because of Turkish opposition. Instead, the Kurds found themselves divided by the international frontiers of Turkey, Iraq and Syria where previously only provincial boundaries had existed under the Ottoman Empire.

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~~The establishment of an independent Kurdistan uniting~~

The establishment of an independent Kurdistan uniting all the Kurds at present divided by international ^{populations} frontiers is not a practical ~~issue~~, though it has long been the dream of almost every Kurd. (1)

4. During the period of British administration (1920-1932) some attention was given to the needs of the Kurds in Iraq, but efforts to establish a special administration for Kurdish districts were hampered by a series of tribal revolts. When Iraq became fully independent in 1932 she made a formal declaration to the League of Nations guaranteeing the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. This

/guaranteed

(1) The 1966 Programme of the Kurdish Democratic Party stated that the Kurds were fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic".

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guaranteed them equality before the law with other Iraqi nationals and stipulated inter alia areas in which Kurdish was to be an official language in addition to Arabic and in which officials should if possible be Kurds. It also promised the allocation of official funds for the provision of primary education in the Kurdish language. The Government, however, rather than honouring this declaration, concerned itself primarily with enforcing its authority in Kurdistan. Kurdish discontent led to a number of uprisings, the most serious of which was led by the tribal leader Mulla ^{MUSTAFA} Barzani in 1943-1945. He was defeated by the Iraqi army, aided by tribes in Government pay, and fled to Iran, where he joined the short-lived Kurdish "Republic of Mahabad". After its collapse he made his way with a number of his followers to the Soviet Union.

5 When Qasim deposed the monarchy in 1958 he made the Kurds promises of equality with the Arab population of Iraq and allowed Barzani to return from exile. After an initial period of cooperation, however, Kurdish opinion hardened against the Government because of its neglect of their interests and its arming of tribes hostile to the Barzanis. In July 1961 the Barzanis took to arms and defeated these enemies. ~~~~~

Supported by other tribes and by members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, they then proceeded to take over Government posts in the north. By the end of August the semi-circle of mountains from north-west of Mosul to south-east of Kirkuk was effectively under Kurdish control. Barzani then presented Qasim with a number of demands, including autonomy for the Kurds, to which Qasim replied by launching a full-scale military offensive against the Kurds in September. Hostilities continued intermittently until Qasim's fall in February 1963, neither side gaining a decisive advantage. The Government forces held the main towns in the north - Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimaniya - but the Kurds controlled most of the rest of their territory.

II. THE KURDISH WAR, 1963-1969

The 1963 Ba'athist campaign

6. Almost immediately after the Ba'ath Party came to power in February 1963 a ceasefire was arranged. Negotiations began in the following month, when it was announced that the Government were prepared to grant the Kurds "national rights on the basis of decentralisation". Kurdish demands for a

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share in oil revenues and other State revenues on a per capita basis and the exclusion of Arab troops from Kurdistan proved unacceptable to the Government and, although they made counter-proposals, it soon became apparent that the negotiations were ~~not~~ getting ^{any}where. In June the Government threw a Kurdish delegation into prison and launched a new military offensive. This was managed with more drive than had been displayed under Qasim, but by the time winter closed in the army had secured control of only a small fraction of the mountainous area of Kurdistan and it was evident that the Government had little hope of imposing a military solution.

as well as being
more ruthless
and bloody,

The 1964 negotiations and Barzani's dispute with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani

7. In February 1964 a cease-fire was announced between the Kurds and the Government, which since the ousting of the Ba'ath in November 1963 had been Nasserist in complexion. An official statement by President Arif promised the Kurds national rights "in a single fraternal national unity", proclaimed a general amnesty, and pledged the Government to undertake the rehabilitation of the north and reinstate Kurdish officials and employees there.

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There followed innumerable visits to the north by Government representatives in an attempt to get the Kurds to accept something less than autonomy.

8. The Kurds themselves meanwhile split into two main factions. The first, led by Barzani, who was both the dominant tribal leader and Chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), took the view that every effort must be made to test the Government's sincerity and see whether an agreement could be reached. The second, a group of younger and more radically inclined KDP members led by Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani, early came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained from dealings with the Government. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the KDP ~~in July 1964, when~~

~~Barzani expelled 14 senior party members, including Ahmad and Talabani and all but one of the party's Politburo.~~ After armed clashes between supporters of the two factions, Ahmad and Talabani fled to Iran

with some 400 of their supporters. *(They were given sanctuary at HAWADAN by the Iranian authorities.)*

The 1965 campaign

9. After more than a year of truce, marked by increasingly desultory negotiations, hostilities were resumed by the Government in the first week of April, 1965. By then most

at QALA DIZA
in July 1964,
reportedly attended
by some 900
delegates, at which

were formally
expelled and a new
Politbureau was
elected. An armed
clash then took
place between
the rival groups,
as a result of
which

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of the dissident Kurdish group had made their peace with Barzani and returned from Iran, though Ibrahim Ahmad remained there unreconciled and Talabani spent the summer abroad trying to rally international support for the Kurdish cause.

10. The 1965 campaign went no better for the Government than previous ones and by the end of the year it was once again evident that deadlock had been reached on the military front. (1)

The Bazzaz proposals. 1966

11. Early in 1966 there were indications that Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, who in the previous autumn had been appointed Iraq's first civilian Premier since the 1958 revolution, was in favour of negotiating peace with the Kurds rather than mounting a new spring offensive. His advice was overruled and a new offensive began in May, but the Government forces almost immediately suffered a severe setback near Rowanduz and early in June the campaign was called off.

12. On 29 June 1966 Dr Bazzaz announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. His twelve points were, in summary:

(i) Equal national rights for Kurds and Arabs in Iraq.

(ii) Decentralisation: elected local assemblies to have wide powers.

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(1) Two notable features of this campaign were - Kurdish accusations that poison gas was used and the presence of UAR troops in a camp near Baghdad (under the auspices of the Iraq-UAR Joint Military Command), which helped to release Iraqi troops from internal security duties to take part in the war.

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(iii) Kurdish to be recognised as an official language, side by side with Arabic, in areas where the Kurds formed a majority.

(iv) Kurdish representation in a National Assembly on a proportional basis.

(v) Public offices and appointments to be open to Kurds.

(vi) Equality of educational opportunity.

(vii) Local officials in Kurdistan to be Kurds.

(viii) A measure of political freedom and freedom of expression for the Kurds.

(ix) A general amnesty and reinstatement of Kurdish officials and employees.

(x) Kurdish members of the armed forces and police to report to their units. Others under arms to surrender their weapons.

(xi) Rehabilitation of the North.

(xii) Resettlement of displaced individuals and groups.

13. The impression created by this declaration was that it was a blueprint for an eventual settlement rather than a settlement in itself. Much of its phraseology was ambiguous and it left a great deal unsaid.⁽¹⁾ It was felt, nevertheless, that as long as Bazzaz remained in office there was a fair chance of progress. The Kurds themselves seemed pleased with the

(1) According to ISMET SHARIF VANLY (LE Kurdistan Irakien, Entité Nationale, Neuchâtel 1970) there were also three secret clauses in which the Government undertook (a) to create a new Liwa of DOHUK, comprising the Kurdish areas then within the Liwa of MOSUL, (b) to free all political prisoners in Iraq, and (c) to legalise the Kurdish Democratic Party.

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proposals, which were officially welcomed by Barzani. By mid-July, however, they were becoming disillusioned by lack of any positive signs of implementation, and when Bazzaz was dismissed in August hopes of a settlement ^{faded.} ~~virtually disappeared.~~

Continued stalemate in 1967

14. Although full-scale hostilities were not resumed in 1966 or 1967, Government forces remained deployed in the north. The Government endeavoured to weaken Barzani's position by giving support to Talabani, who had again broken with him; sporadic armed clashes took place between the rival Kurdish groups, but Talabani's faction was too weak to present a serious challenge to Barzani's authority.

The return of the Ba'ath. 1968.

15. The Ba'athist Government which came to power in July 1968 did not at first show any sign of having better ideas on how to deal with the Kurds than those which the previous Ba'athist Government had had in 1963 or those which other administrations had applied in the interim. They thus continued the policy which they had inherited of containing the extent of the area controlled by the Kurds and supporting Talabani's faction with money and arms.

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16. After a time, however, they began to give effect to certain of the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966. Thus Kurdish was made the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish areas; a university was established in Suleimaniya; a Kurdish Academy of Letters was set up; an amnesty was declared for those who had taken part in the fighting; and a measure of decentralisation of power to the governorates was introduced. In spite of these propitiatory gestures, skirmishing continued throughout 1969.

III. THE MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT

17. In January 1970 it became apparent that serious negotiations were taking place between the Ba'ath and representatives of Barzani under cover of a de facto cease-fire. The successful outcome of these negotiations was announced by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council on 11 March. The terms of the announcement⁽¹⁾ followed fairly closely the proposals put forward by Dr. Bazzaz in 1966 and contained the following main points:

(1) For a more detailed text of the announcement see Annex.

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(i) The Kurds were to enjoy national rights and autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic. The areas of Kurdish autonomy were to be determined by an official census.

(ii) The existence of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd, was to be recognised in the Constitution.

(iii) A Kurd was to be appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

(iv) The Kurds were to share in the legislative power on a proportional basis.

(v) The Kurds were to participate in the Government and in Government departments without discrimination.

(vi) Officials in Kurdish areas were to be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language.

(vii) Kurdish and Arabic were both to be official languages in the Kurdish areas; Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in these areas.

(viii) All former Kurdish military and civil officials, students and workers were to be reinstated.

(ix) Educational and cultural facilities for Kurds were to be expanded.

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(x) The Kurds were to have their own organisations for students, youth, women and teachers, affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

(xi) Inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages were to be restored to their former homes.

(xii) Relief measures for Kurds affected by the hostilities were to be put in hand.

(xiii) A Kurdish development commission with an adequate budget was to be established and a special economic plan for the Kurdish region was to be prepared.

(xiv) Agrarian reform was to be speeded up in Kurdish areas.

(xv) The exploitation of national resources in the autonomous area was to be the responsibility of the Republican authorities.

(xvi) The Kurdish broadcasting station and all heavy weapons were to be surrendered during the final stages of the implementation of the agreement.

18. The published agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol containing the following provisions:

(1) A joint committee was to be set up to supervise implementation of the agreement.

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(ii) One of the tasks of this committee would be to resettle the Pish Merga (Kurdish rebel forces), whose number was to be reduced to about 6,000 men. During the period of resettlement, which would be in five unspecified stages, the Government would pay for the general upkeep of the force.

(iii) The Government would disarm and disband all Kurdish forces opposed to Barzani, and the Iraqi armed forces would withdraw to their "normal positions".

(iv) The KDP was to be allowed to operate freely in the Kurdish region and to publish its own newspaper.

(v) All persons formerly in Government service who took part in the Kurdish rebellion would be permitted to resume their employment without loss of seniority. Those who had served with the Kurdish armed forces would be permitted to count that service as if they had served in the Iraqi armed forces.

(vi) A nation-wide census would take place within one year to define the region of Kurdish majority.

(vii) Although the Iraqi national flag would not be altered immediately to incorporate a Kurdish symbol, this would be done as and when the flag was changed.

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19. Although the secret clauses went some way towards removing obscurities in the published terms, some important points, such as the exact nature of Kurdish autonomy and the amount to be allocated by the Iraq Government for the development of the Kurdish region, remained to be clarified; it was evident that further negotiation would be needed on these and other points before the settlement could be considered comprehensive.
20. ~~the~~ Progress in implementing the agreement during 1970 was not speedy. The amnesty was generally observed, development activities began in Kurdistan, and a number of gestures were made by the Government in the cultural and educational fields. ^{But although five} ~~five~~ Kurds were appointed Ministers, ~~but~~ the promised Kurdish Vice-President was not appointed, and the establishment of a National Assembly in which the Kurds might have proportional representation ^{remained} ~~seemed~~ as far away as ever. The Government ~~kept their promise to withdraw~~ their support from ~~Kurdish forces hostile to Barzani and as a result~~ Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad ^{who} made their submission to Barzani ~~and~~ ^{formally merged} merging their "Kurdish Revolutionary Party" with the KDP. A number of the Pish Merga returned to their civilian occupations and a number were formed into a Kurdish frontier

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force under the Ministry of Interior, but Barzani retained some 20,000 men under arms and kept both his heavy weapons and his broadcasting station. (In March 1971 it was reported that he had handed them over, but in fact he retained the major part of his serviceable equipment.) The future of the KDP, which was among the questions not satisfactorily spelt out in the agreement, remained unresolved; declarations of its identity of outlook with the Ba'ath were issued from time to time but no practical relationship was forged. A clear-cut picture of future administrative arrangements within Kurdistan^{also} failed to emerge: there can be little doubt that by "autonomy" the Government meant no more than a modest measure of regional administration, whereas the Kurds intended it to mean a good deal more.

20. The all-important question of the physical extent of the area of Kurdish autonomy also remained unresolved. The published agreement promised a census to determine this, and the secret agreement stipulated that ~~this~~ census should take place within one year, ^{but although} ~~it~~ was later announced that ^{it was postponed some time} ~~it~~ would take place in October ~~but~~ shortly before the appointed date ~~it was postponed~~

~~in fixing the boundary of the Kurdish region~~ The main difficulty concerned the status of the governorate of Kirkuk, which

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contains the main oil-bearing area of Iraq and has a mixed population of Turkomans, Kurds and

Arabs. (The position is complicated by the fact that ^{many} ~~some~~ Kurdish families ^{were driven from their homes} ~~left the area~~ ^{Arabs have been settled} during hostilities and ~~past Governments have settled Arabs~~ in their place.) ~~The Kurds,~~

While accepting in March that the

exploitation of the oilfields should be under

the jurisdiction of the central Government, ^{the Kurds have long insisted}

^{should be} claim that Kirkuk ~~is~~ their capital and are

not prepared to accept its exclusion from the

autonomous region. The Government, for their

part, could hardly be expected to accept a

boundary which left the oilfields on the wrong

side of the line from their point of view.

Given the impossibility of the two sides

coming to amicable agreement, it was perhaps

as well in the short term that the census was

^{postponed} ~~shelved~~, since it would have excited passions

on both sides and might have jeopardised the

implementation of other parts of the agreement,

but ⁱⁿ the long term, ~~however~~, no settlement can

be considered permanent until the territorial

question is solved.

22. The postponement of the census did not ^{immediately}

~~provoke a reaction from the Kurds.~~

~~seem to disturb the Kurds greatly.~~ Their

first priority was evidently to see that the

Government went ahead with reconstruction and

development in the north, ^{as long as progress}

and it was felt that

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continued to be made in this and other fields they would continue to observe the truce, though their patience might not be inexhaustible. The Government too, needing the stability that a settlement could bring, seemed to have no immediate intention of renewing hostilities. (It is noteworthy in this connexion that the political reputation of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the strong man of the Iraqi Ba'ath, is linked to the March 1970 agreement, which he engineered in the face of considerable opposition from within the party.) In 1971, however, there have been indications of a deterioration in Kurdish-Government relations, as evidenced both by a dispute over the ~~status~~ status of the Feili Kurds - a tribe mainly of Iranian origin (and citizenship), many of whom work as labourers and porters in Baghdad and who were claiming Iraqi citizenship - and ^{by} reports of skirmishes in the north in which pro-Talabani tribes appear to have been involved. No doubt in response to Kurdish complaints, (in May the Government set up a new Higher Committee for Kurdish Affairs, with the ostensible purpose of implementing the March agreement more actively, but since none of its members was a Kurd it can hardly have inspired much confidence in the Kurdish side. The situation seems almost to have reached an impasse ~~again~~ again and in the light of past experience it seems unlikely that a /solution

solution to the outstanding problems will be found. If Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of implementation of the agreement continues to grow, there may soon be further outbreaks of fighting serious enough to render the settlement a dead letter.

IV. POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH REVOLT

Political

23. Since 1961, when Barzani established himself as the dominant tribal leader and the KDP joined forces with him, the Iraqi Kurds have presented a more united front than during previous revolts. The feud which has

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continued on and off since 1964 between Barzani on the one hand and Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad on the other, however, is a symptom of the difference of outlook which separates the tribal population of the mountainous north from the urban population of the south of Kurdistan and the intellectuals in Baghdad and elsewhere. As long as the settlement remains incomplete and Barzani remains in reasonable health - he is now nearly 70 years of age - his position as the overall leader of the Iraqi Kurds is unlikely to be challenged, but if a lasting peace is made serious divisions within the Kurdish ranks are likely to reappear. The tribal leaders, who will not necessarily remain united among themselves, will naturally wish to see their authority being maintained in Kurdistan, whereas the more radical elements will want to see the KDP playing a dominant rôle in the administration of the area and pursuing progressive policies, including social and agrarian reform. In the long term the intelligentsia could find that they have more in common with the Arab socialists in Baghdad than with their own tribal kinsmen; as Talabani's separate dealings with the Baghdad authorities have already suggested.

this in part explains

(1) [see next page] - 18 -

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	<p>(1) Vanli, top. cit.^{top. cit.} describes Barzani as both a protector of the traditional chiefs vis-à-vis the party radicals and a "catalyst of all the national forces". A national hero since the days of the Mahabad Republic and his exile in the Soviet Union, he has unrivalled experience as leader of the^{the} Kurdish national movement and is at his best in a crisis. But his vision is limited and he can be stubborn and inflexible. His own ideas as to as to future political arrangements in Kurdistan seem to be vague.</p>	

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24. Since the KDP is the only Kurdish political organisation in Iraq, any future struggle for control of the Kurdish movement is likely to centre on it. Its programme⁽¹⁾, adopted in 1964 and revised in 1966, is decidedly Left-wing in tone, but this ^{is in part} ~~may be partly~~ a legacy from the old programme adopted in Qasim's time. Since 1964, when Barzani moved against ~~the~~ ^{its} Left-wing Politbureau, the party has been largely subordinate to his authority, and in the last elections to its central committee, in July 1970, Right-wing members came out on top. But the firmer peace /becomes

(1) Article 2 of the programme ~~says~~ ^{states} that the party is "a democratic, revolutionary and avant-garde party which represents the interests of the workers, peasants, salaried persons, artisans and revolutionary intellectuals of Iraqi Kurdistan". Article 3 ~~says~~ ^{states} that the party is fighting "for liberation and ~~for~~ the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic". Article 5 ~~says~~ that the party has recourse to "the progressive scientific doctrines which correspond to the realities of our Kurdish people". Article 6 ~~says~~ that the party is fighting for the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Iraq and for freedom of speech, religion, political organisation, etc. Article 13 demands the allocation of a percentage of Iraq's oil revenues to Kurdistan, proportionate to ~~the~~ population. Article 14 advocates agrarian reform in Kurdistan, specially adapted to the conditions there and aimed at establishing a minimum acreage for each peasant and abolishing the feudal system; it also suggests ways of modernising agriculture in Kurdistan. Article 16 contains a section on taxes, which should be "just and based on direct and progressive taxes on income and hereditary wealth and on the reduction of indirect taxes, which hit the working classes". Other articles concern the development of industry and communications, the development of Kurdish culture and education, the adoption of a "non-aligned" and "anti-imperialist" foreign policy", etc.

becomes, and the more active the party is able to become politically, the more radical elements are likely to make their influence felt within it.

25. Although in the early days of Qasim's rule the KDP associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, (since 1960, when the party was purged) their influence has been negligible; ~~it is significant that in 1964,~~ ^{at the same time the Communist bias in the} ~~after the expulsion of the old Politbureau, the~~ ^{watered down.} party's programme was amended ~~to exclude references to Marxism-Leninism.~~ A number of members of the Committee for the Defence of Kurdistan, the Kurdish students' association in Europe, have Communist leanings, but they are not in the mainstream of the Kurdish movement, which is essentially nationalist and opportunist in character.

26. The organisational framework of the Kurdish revolt is complex, covering as it does a large and varied ^{geographical} physical area and many disparate elements of population. The principal organs of Kurdish authority in the period 1966-1970 were the Revolutionary Council, the Executive Bureau and the KDP Politbureau. Vanli⁽¹⁾ describes the Revolutionary Council as a kind of elected parliament of 62 members, which exercises supreme authority and meets every four months (or more frequently if requested by the /President

(1) op. cit. Appendices VII and VIII of this book contain ^{French translation of} the texts of the ~~1964~~ Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Revolution and the Administrative Law of the Revolution, both dated 17 October 1964.

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President, by a majority of its own members, or by the Executive Bureau). The Executive Bureau he describes as a Ministerial Cabinet responsible for controlling all the Kurdish revolutionary organs, including the army. Considerable influence is exerted on it by the KDP Politbureau, which designates a number of its members.⁽¹⁾ (This is where the formal link between the KDP and the revolutionary administration as a whole is to be found.) Barzani is Chairman of all three above bodies, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and is thus in a position to dominate the whole machine.

/27.

(1) Other members of the Executive Bureau are representatives of the military, the tribes, other civilians, and the Christian (Assyrian) community. The Politbureau itself is elected from among members of the KDP Central Committee, which is elected by a congress of KDP members.

Military

27. The Kurdish rebel forces (Pish Merga) number some 25,000 when fully mobilised. Arms in their possession include rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, and some artillery pieces. They also possess radio equipment and some motor transport. A substantial proportion of their small arms have been captured or stolen from the Iraqi army. Most of the rest, and the majority of their heavier weapons, were supplied by Iran and Israel between 1963 and 1966. They may also have received some arms from Czechoslovakia, but not on the same scale.

28. The Pish Merga are reportedly divided into ^{ten "brigades"} ~~major units~~ about 2,000 strong, recruited on a local basis and enjoying a great deal of independence. ~~Because of their regional nature these units lack mobility~~ and their activities are not fully coordinated, though a degree of central control is exercised by Mulla Mustafa Barzani as Commander-in-Chief, ~~and~~ the small groups used for commando activities are extremely mobile considering the nature of the terrain.

Barzani himself, who has round him ^{a guard} ~~what are~~ of ~~tribesmen~~ some 200 strong, ~~probably the crack Kurdish troops~~, is constantly on the move during hostilities in

order to escape detection. (His family is usually with him. His third son, IDRIS, acts as his aide de camp.)

Because of their regional nature they lack mobility, though

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29. Kurdish military organisation seems to have improved considerably between 1963 and 1966 as the result partly of Israeli instruction and partly of an influx of Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi army. The Kurds have employed guerrilla tactics with fair success, not attempting to hold towns but drawing the Iraqi army on into the mountains and harassing it there. Ground lost in the summer has usually been regained in the winter, when snow and rain present the Government forces with severe difficulties. For the Kurds the war has been essentially a defensive one, aimed partly at keeping open their supply routes from Iran. They have not taken advantage of every opportunity to discomfit the Iraqi army; nor have they made as much use as they might of the weapon of sabotage, to which the oil installations in the Kirkuk area in particular are extremely vulnerable (see paragraph 43 below). The fact that fighting has mostly taken place in the hills and no attempt made by the Kurds to occupy major towns has suited Barzani in that as long as the fighting was in tribal territory he could fairly claim that the ^{Kurdish} administration should remain ^{predominantly} ~~primarily~~ tribal in structure.

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V. ATTITUDES OF REGIONAL COUNTRIES TO THE KURDISH PROBLEM

Syria

28. In 1963, when Ba'athist régimes were in power in both Baghdad and Damascus, the Syrians sent about two brigades of troops openly to Iraq to assist in the Kurdish war [↑] ~~(though not in the front line)~~. Since 1963 the two countries have not been on good terms and Syria has pursued a policy of non-involvement in the dispute. ^{Although} Syrian Kurds are thought to have helped their Iraqi brethren financially and there has been some coming and going over the Syrian border during hostilities, ~~but~~ the Syrian authorities have kept a fairly tight rein on Kurdish activities. Kurdish nationalism is no longer considered a live issue within Syria, the Kurds there being too few to carry much weight (about 300,000).

Turkey

31. Turkey has not involved herself openly in the dispute but ^{has} ~~is believed to have~~ supplied the Iraqi Kurds with modest amounts of provisions, clothing and medicine. She ~~has also~~ relaxed controls on the Iraqi border during hostilities. She would ~~no doubt~~ ^{probably} welcome a permanent settlement in Iraq ^{if} ~~as~~ it would mean ~~greater~~ stability on her south-eastern border, ~~where the Iraqis~~

and published propaganda about helping Iraq to free herself of "separatists and bandits".

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but she must have fears that it would in fact have sometimes accidentally dropped bombs encourage the aspirations of her own Kurdish population, intended for their own Kurdish rebels, which numbers some 3 million.

Attention was drawn to Turkey's own Kurdish problem in April 1971, when one of the reasons given by the Turkish Government for imposing martial law was the threat of a Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey, where the Kurdish population numbers some 3 million. ^{the Turks} (They indicated in confidence that ^{the} trouble among the Kurds, particularly the students, was being directed from East Germany.) At a press conference on 1 May, however, the Prime Minister said that the threat ^{from the Kurds} was potential rather than actual and that the imposition of martial law allowed the security forces full control of the situation.

Iran

32. It is believed that the Kurds received financial aid from the Iranian Government in Qasim's time and that some Kurds were given training in heavy weapons units of the Iranian army.

33. Iran's distrust of the Ba'ath Government and of its dealings with Nasser led her to increase her aid to the Kurds substantially in 1963, though the Shah resisted the temptation to declare open support for their cause.

Since 1963 Iran has been the Kurds' most important ally, supplying them with arms and other equipment, provisions, cash, training,

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and rear communications. Iranian aid is one of the "open secrets" of the Middle East and has frequently been referred to by the Shah in private as his "Kurdish card" in terms of his relations with the Iraq Government. ^{It is evident that} Although ~~by supporting Borsani~~ he risked stimulating the ambitions of Iran's own Kurdish population and provoking Iraq to retaliatory measures in the Shatt-al-Arab and Khuzistan ^{by supporting Borsani} he felt that he could not let slip such an opportunity to embarrass and weaken the Iraq régime. He also saw his action as pre-empting Soviet involvement with the Kurds; Soviet support for them had been limited almost entirely to verbal support in Qasim's time, but in view of the extreme antipathy of the Soviet Union to the Ba'ath régime ^{of 1963} there were widespread fears that it might take on a more substantial form and threaten the security of other countries in the area as well as Iraq.

34. The Iraq Government have on several occasions complained to Iran about her support for the Kurds, notably in January 1966 when the Iraqi garrison at Panjwin was cut off by the Kurds and subjected to artillery bombardment. ^{Iraq} They then accused Iran both of supplying the Kurds with arms and of allowing her territory to be used for mounting the bombardment. The Iranian Government rejected the charges.

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35. In addition to supplying aid of their own, the Iranians have allowed Israel to send aid to the Iraqi Kurds via their territory. Most other aid, including Red Cross aid⁽¹⁾, has also been delivered through Iran.

36. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq and, if implemented, will increase Iraq's ability to cause her trouble in return. She can therefore be expected to work against it if possible, but she has no real influence over Barzani and cannot force him to take up arms again.

37. Iran herself has a Kurdish population of about 1½ million. It is unlikely that the achievement of autonomy of a kind by the Kurds in Iraq would have serious repercussions among them as the Kurds generally feel themselves closer to the Persians than to the Arabs and those in Iran have by and large received tolerant treatment at the hands of the authorities during the last decade.

(1) This has been considerable. According to VANLI (op.cit.) eight national Red Cross organisations, of which he mentions by name only those of Sweden and Hungary, have sent relief supplies under the auspices of the International Red Cross.

(Kurdish areas were among the first to benefit from the Iranian land reform programme, which was not, however, rigorously enforced in tribal areas, and development has begun to touch Iranian Kurdistan.)
Israel

38. Israel has supplied arms covertly to the Kurds since at the latest 1964, sending them by way of Iran with the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. She has also provided military advisers, training for Kurdish

officers, and some cash. Her aim has been to weaken the Iraq Government generally and, specifically, to tie down in northern Iraq troops which would otherwise be available for hostilities against her. She is thought to have supplied rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Her aid is a better kept secret than that of Iran but is known to the Iraqi authorities and has sometimes been the subject of speculation in the press, in the Arab world and elsewhere.

VI. ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

39. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and has criticised successive governments there for their treatment of the Kurds. The degree of her criticism has, *however,* tended to vary according to her opinion of the government of the day. Thus when the Ba'ath Government, which was strongly anti-Communist, renewed hostilities against the Kurds in 1963 the Soviet Union whipped up a violent propaganda campaign against it and threatened to raise the Kurdish question at

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the UN Security Council. At the same time Mongolia, probably at Soviet bidding, requested that an item accusing the Iraq Government of genocide be ^{inscribed} ~~included~~ in the provisional agenda of the UN General Assembly. (Neither initiative came to anything because of lack of support from Afro-Asian members ~~and Soviet reluctance to alienate Arab opinion.~~)

and a certain reluctance on the part of the Soviet Union to alienate Arab opinion as a whole. (1)

In 1965, in contrast, when the Soviet Union was on more friendly terms with the Baghdad Government, Soviet propaganda was pitched in a low key and no move was made to bring the question before the United Nations.

40
28. Although the Kurdish problem presented the Soviet Union with an opportunity to fish in troubled waters - support for the Kurds in Iraq could have led to subversion of the Kurds in Iran, Turkey, and elsewhere - she made little use of this opportunity during the period under review because of the overriding importance which she attached to her relations with the Iraq Government and the Arab world as a whole. While providing the Iraqi Kurds with moral support and a certain amount of financial assistance, she and other Communist countries have given them little else in the way of aid, though there have been unconfirmed reports of Czech arms being delivered to Barzani by way of Eastern Turkey and the Soviet Red Cross is known to have sent him some provisions, clothing and medicine.

(1) The Kurds ~~have~~ sent a number of delegations to lobby at the United Nations, between 1962 and 1968, without success.

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41. The continuance of the Kurdish dispute was a subject of reproof in the Soviet Union's dealings with the ^{Iraqi} Ba'ath prior to the March 1970 settlement and she was undoubtedly active behind the scenes in promoting it. The extent of her involvement is not certain, but in Pravda of 28 April 1970 the Secretary-General of the KDP was quoted as having praised the Soviet Union for her "noble efforts" in "putting an end to the fratricidal war...and re-establishing calm and peace in Iraq..." The Soviet public will have understood from this that their Government were openly taking credit for bringing about the settlement.

/42.

VII. ATTITUDE OF HMG

42

39. During the period under review HMG's policy concerning the Kurdish question continued to be one of non-involvement. The public position was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in Parliament in June 1965, when he said: "HMG regret the fighting in Kurdistan, as any other instability in the Middle East, but we regard the Kurdish question as an internal Iraqi matter in which it would be inappropriate for us to interfere". In private, HMG have on appropriate occasions urged both sides to reach a peaceful settlement.

40. The Kurdish dispute is of special concern to ^{Britain} HMG in that the installations of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), in which Shell and BP both have a 23.75% interest, are extremely vulnerable to Kurdish attack. In Qasim's time the Kurds shrank from sabotage, except of a very minor nature, but abducted two IPC employees in 1962 in a successful attempt to gain publicity. During hostilities in 1963, 1965 and 1966 there were a few more minor incidents of sabotage, some of which may have been intended as a threat of more serious action. Fears of major sabotage, however, proved groundless, seemingly because the Kurds

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did not wish to alienate Iraqi or Western opinion or destroy what they hoped would one day be the major source of their own income. The most serious incident in the history of the dispute took place in 1969, when damage to installations in Kirkuk caused by mortar fire affected operations for more than a week. All in all, ^{it may be said that} the Kurds ~~seem to~~ represent the least of the threats to the supply of oil from Iraq.

44. Another way in which the Kurdish revolt has touched on HMG's interests is that the deployment of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan has reduced Iraq's capability to attack Kuwait or operate elsewhere in the Gulf. This consideration, ^{however,} has not provided adequate grounds for contemplating active support for the Kurds, which would have jeopardised HMG's considerable political and commercial interests in Iraq and caused anxiety in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. (Since the March 1970 agreement some redeployment of the Iraqi Army has in fact taken place, giving rise to anxiety in Kuwait in particular.)

45. While HMG have given over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, the humanitarian consideration that arms might be used against Kurdish

civilians has at times been an inhibiting factor in their policy on arms supplies to Iraq. Thus in 1963 ^{they} ~~HMG~~ decided to phase the delivery of rockets, mortar bombs and other ammunition ordered by the Iraq armed forces, and a similar decision was taken with regard to the supply of ammunition and rockets in 1964. But HMG have never actually refused to supply any arms because of Kurdish considerations; other factors, particularly the possibility of weaning Iraq away from dependence on Soviet military supplies, have been considered more important.

46. HMG's policy of non-involvement has not stood in the way of cautious contact with the Kurds, with whom it has been felt desirable to keep on as good terms as possible within the limitations of the situation. In London, Kurdish emissaries have been received by members of the FCO outside the office on an unofficial basis. In Baghdad, paradoxically, dealings have tended to be less circumspect because many Kurds in touch with rebel groups have been allowed to circulate freely and have even participated in the Government. At other posts Kurdish emissaries have been received if they have requested interviews; letters for the Prime Minister or other Ministers have been accepted and forwarded to the FCO, but it has been

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customary not to give a written acknowledgment or send a reply.

47. The activities of Kurdish emissaries in London have on occasion evoked protest from the Iraq Ambassador - notably in 1965, when Jalal al Talabani appeared on BBC television. The question of granting visas to them has been reviewed on a number of occasions: ~~the~~ policy has been to issue visas, but sometimes to accompany their issue with an (unenforceable) request that the applicant should not take part in political or propaganda activities which might be embarrassing to HMG.

48. Despite HMG's policy of non-involvement, the Iraq Government have tended to suspect Britain of supplying the Kurds with aid in cooperation with Iran. (The fact that both are members of CENTO has lent colour to this myth.) In August 1965 the Iraqis claimed to have concrete evidence of this in the shape of arms and ammunition captured from the Kurds. Details of the items which were later furnished were insufficient to enable identification ~~of the ammunition~~, but it was considered likely that the Kurds had captured ~~them~~ ~~it~~ from the Iraqi army in the first instance. HMG gave Iraq an assurance that they had not supplied arms to the Kurds.

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46. HMG were reluctant to agree to numerous requests from Iraq between 1963 and 1966 that they should bring their influence to bear on the Shah to stop his aid to the Kurds, ~~it being~~ ^{it being} felt that there was a likelihood of causing irritation without affecting Iranian policy. On one occasion in 1965, however, HMG did undertake to transmit representations on behalf of the Iraqis, without entering into the merits of the complaint; and in January 1966, when a series of border incidents connected with the Kurdish war had created extreme tension between Iran and Iraq, HMG counselled moderation on both Governments at each other's request, but in a low key. Circumstances have not been comparable since.

47. The last occasion on which the Kurdish question was raised in Parliament was in December 1969, when it was asked whether HMG would seek to raise at the UN Human Rights Commission the dangers to peace in the Middle East arising from "the bombing and atrocities against Kurds carried out by the Iraqi Government". The Minister of State for the FCO replied: "No. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for HMG to take the initiative in this matter at the UN.

SECRET

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Our attitude towards action at the UN, were this subject to be raised in the Human Rights Commission, would depend on the case that is presented". This reply was in accordance with HMG's policy of non-involvement in the Kurdish dispute. It did not, however, rule out in principle the discussion of the question by the UN because HMG consider that where a consistent pattern of violations of human rights, in the sense of a general policy, is alleged to exist the UN can legitimately consider the situation even though the allegation concerns an internal matter of a Member State. (Anything falling short of a consistent pattern, or a general policy, is probably covered by the domestic jurisdiction of the UN Charter (Article 2(7)), except where an individual instance of violation is part of a general policy.) In 1963, when Mongolia requested that a charge of genocide be brought against the Iraq Government, but later dropped the request, HMG similarly did not have to commit themselves on the question, but it was felt within the Foreign Office at that time that Iraqi methods, including the bombing of Kurdish villages, had exceeded purely military requirements and might sustain a charge of a deliberate attempt to destroy the Kurds as a race.

SECRET

48. HMG's policy of non-involvement has meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid, except that since the March 1970 settlement it has been agreed to award some technical assistance fellowships to Kurds through Iraq Government channels. ↑

(Since then H.M. Embassy, Baghdad, have also corresponded with War on Want on the possibility of the latter supplying medical assistance to the Kurds through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.)

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

49. The period 1963-1966 was marked by annual hostilities between the Kurds and the Iraq Government, except in 1964, when abortive negotiations took place. During this period the Kurds received substantial military aid from Iran and Israel.

50. The proposals put forward by Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz in June 1966 raised hopes of a settlement, but these were dashed when he was dismissed in August 1966. Limited hostilities continued until March 1970, when a settlement was announced. Some progress has been made in implementing this settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Pish Merga and the KDP, have yet to be resolved in detail. There is thus a long way to go before the settlement can be considered permanent, ↑

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the ^{slow} ~~pace~~ of implementation of the March 1970 agreement is growing. If this continues there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

SECRET

However,

54. It is to the advantage of nearly all that the settlement should ~~be lasting~~ ^{endure}. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house as long as the Kurds are in rebellion. For HMG, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

55. The reverse side of the coin is that with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country Iraq will be freer to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf, or on the Israeli front. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it ^{paradoxically} a potential threat to stability in other ^{areas} parts of the Middle East. It is least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraqi régime, and Kuwait who fears Iraq's territorial ambitions.

56. It is unlikely that the granting of autonomy of a kind to the Kurds in Iraq will have serious repercussions among the neighbouring Kurdish populations in Iran and Syria, but the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in Turkey in April 1971.

- 35 -

SECRET

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Particularly ~~of~~ in the period after ~~the~~ military withdrawal, on the "Eastern front" with Israel.

against whom the Iraqi claims derived by Qasim in 1963, it still ~~theoretically~~ unresolved.

who remain suspicious of Iraqi territorial ambitions despite Iraq's formal acceptance of the 1963 Kuwaiti independence within the 1932 frontier.

57. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as that of Iraq herself. But she chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world and has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She ^{undoubtedly} ~~probably~~ played ~~some~~ ^a part in promoting the 1970 settlement.

58. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

ANNEX

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL, 11 MARCH, 1970.

(The declaration begins with a long partisan review of the history of the Kurdish question and lists those measures taken by the Ba'athist régime in the last 18 months which, it claims, laid the foundation for the present agreement with the Kurds. What follows is a verbatim translation of the rest of the declaration.)

The Revolutionary Command Council initiated contacts with Mustafa al Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which led to an exchange of views. Both sides became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this declaration.

The Revolutionary Command Council reaffirms its determination to deepen and expand all effective measures to achieve cultural and economic development in the Kurdish area, seeking first of all to enable the Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and to ensure that they participate in a practical way in the earnest endeavours to build a homeland and the struggle to fulfil its great national aims. The Revolutionary Command Council has therefore reached the following decisions:

1. The Kurdish language shall be with Arabic the official language in areas populated by the Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic shall be taught in all schools where Kurdish is the language of instruction while Kurdish shall be taught in schools throughout the remainder of Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.
2. The participation of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between Kurds and others in filling public offices including sensitive and important posts in the State, such as Cabinet Portfolios, Army Command, etc. These have been and will remain among the important objectives which the revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. In recognising this the revolutionary Government stresses the necessity of achieving an equitable ratio in such appointments with due regard to efficiency, the proportionate distribution of the Kurdish population and the inequities which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past.
3. In view of the cultural and educational backwardness of the Kurdish population, a plan will be drawn up to make good this backwardness by:
 - (a) Hastening implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people and delegating to the Directorate-General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and directing radio and television programmes on Kurdish national issues.

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(b) Reinstating, regardless of age, all students expelled or compelled to leave school because of the conflict in the area; failing reinstatement, to find appropriate solutions in individual cases.

(c) Building more schools in the Kurdish area. Raising the standard of education and admitting students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and scholarships in numbers proportionate to the Kurdish population.

4. In the administrative units in predominantly Kurdish areas officials shall be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language provided that the required number is available. Principal officials (Governor, Qaimaqam, Director of Police, Director of Security, etc), will be appointed and immediate action will be taken to set up Government machinery in the area in consultation with the High Committee established to supervise the implementation of this statement; this to be carried out in a manner which will strengthen national unity and the stability of the area.

5. The Government recognises the right of the Kurdish people to set up their own organisations for students, young people, women and teachers which will be affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

6. (a) The operative period of paragraphs 1 and 2 of RCC decision No 39 of 5 August, 1968 (this granted amnesty to all those involved in the Kurdish fighting up to that date) shall be extended up to the date of issue of this statement and shall extend to all those who participated in the conflict in the Kurdish area.

(b) Workers, officials and employees, both civilian and military, shall return to service irrespective of establishment. Civilians may be employed in the Kurdish area according to requirements.

7. (a) A committee of experts shall be set up to supervise the general development of the Kurdish area and to arrange compensation for the setbacks of recent years. An adequate budget is to be allocated for this purpose. The committee in question shall come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Northern Affairs.

(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up to ensure balanced development throughout Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

(c) Pensions shall be paid to the families of those members of the Kurdish armed movement and others martyred during the past regrettable hostilities; pensions will also be paid to those disabled or deformed as a result of the fighting. Special legislation will be enacted to implement this on the lines of the laws currently in force.

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(d) Immediate action will be taken to relieve hardship by implementing housing projects, providing appropriate aid in cash and in kind and by arranging through the High Committee for the appropriate compensation to those in need who are not covered by the provisions of the paragraphs above.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former homes. The inhabitants of villages in areas not designated for habitation and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and properly compensated.

9. The Agrarian Reform Law shall be quickly implemented in the Kurdish area and amended in such a way as to guarantee the end of the feudal system and the acquisition by the peasants of suitable plots of land. Taxes on such land which accumulated over the period of the conflict shall be waived.

10. It has been agreed that the Interim Constitution shall be amended as follows:

(a) The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

(b) The following paragraph shall be added to Article 4 of the Constitution:

"The Kurdish language shall be, with Arabic, the official language in the Kurdish area."

(c) The above will be incorporated into the permanent Constitution.

11. The (Kurdish) broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be handed over to the Government. This to be done when the final stages of the agreement are implemented.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

13. The Governorates Law shall be amended to conform with the substance of this statement.

14. Following the publication of this statement the necessary measures shall be taken in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units in areas populated by a Kurdish majority; these areas to be decided by an official census yet to be carried out. The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the

CONFIDENTIAL

Kurdish people's exercise of all their national rights as a guarantee of their enjoying autonomy (al-hukm adh-dhati) within the wider national unity. Until this administrative unity is achieved Kurdish national affairs shall be co-ordinated by periodic meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As autonomy is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic the exploitation of natural resources in the area will naturally fall under the jurisdiction of the Republican authorities.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a ratio corresponding with their proportion of the Iraqi population.

(The declaration concludes with general exhortations)

SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London S.W.1

Research Department
Riverwalk House
Millbank
SW1P 4RR

RR 6/10

A C D S MacRae Esq
BAGHDAD

6 September 1971

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

1. I enclose a draft Research Department memorandum on which we would welcome your comments.
2. I am also sending copies to Given (Beirut), Dodds (Ankara), Arbuthnott (Tehran), Everard (Bahrain) and Scott (Moscow).

E E Orchard

Director of Research

ENC

SECRET

Similar letters addressed to:-

E F Given, Esq, CMG
BEIRUT

J Dodds, Esq
ANKARA

H J Arbuthnott, Esq
TEHRAN

T J Everard, Esq
BAHRAIN

K B A Scott, Esq
MOSCOW

W/3

Registry

RR 6/10

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DRAFT Letters

Type 1 +

To:— Mr A C D S MacRae
(Baghdad)
Mr E F Given (Beirut)
Mr J Dodds (Ankara)
Mr H J Arbuthnott
(Tehran)
Mr T J Everard (Bahrain)
Mr K B A Scott (Moscow)

From
Mr E E Orchard
Telephone No. & Ext.
MA 218
Department
Director of Research

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71.

1. I enclose a ~~Draft~~ Research Department memorandum/on which we would welcome your comments.
2. I am also sending copies to MacRae (Baghdad), etc etc

SL

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Mr Orchard 6/9.
Mr Dunnage/Leah 6/9

The Kurdish Problem - Aug 1963-71

I attach a second draft of the above memorandum, which has been cleared with N.E.D., S.E.D. Soviet Section & W.N. Section.

2. Subject to any comments you may have, the paper is now ready for post comment. I suggest it goes to Baghdad, Beirut, Ankara, Tehran, Bahrain & Moscow, & I attach 6 copies accordingly.

[Signature]

M.E. Section.

25/8/77

Mr. Bannerman

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

1. I have now incorporated comments by other Departments and Sections. I have also expanded the old paragraphs 22-27 (new paras 23-29) to take account of information in a recently published book on Kurdistan.

2. Near Eastern Department have suggested that copies should be sent for comment to Baghdad, Beirut, Ankara, Tehran and Bahrain. One should also go to Moscow. As Near Eastern Department would like a copy of the revised draft, I suggest we have at least 9 copies made.

C.J.S. Rundle

17 August 1971

(C.J.S. Rundle)

Mr. Rundle.

Thank you. I have made one or two minor amendments. Please have the new draft typed up + submit with sufficient copies for the posts.

B. 12/8.

SECRET

Reference..... W/1

Miss Bishop (UN Section)

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

I attach a copy of paragraph 47 of a draft paper on this subject and should be grateful if you would confirm that it reflects accurately HMG's attitude to the discussion at the UN of alleged violations of human rights where they concern an internal matter of a Member State. (The position as set out in this draft paragraph is as given in entered FCO papers on the Kurdish problem.)

C.J.S. Rundle

(C.J.S. Rundle)

Middle East Section

R 716

25 May 1971

Mr Rundle Middle East Section Research Department

Paragraph 47 of your paper is fine. It gives a good and accurate picture of HMG's attitude to the discussion at the United Nations of alleged violations of human rights where they concern an internal matter of a Member State.

My humble apologies for answering so late.

R S Bishop

R.S. Bishop
UN Section Research
Department
13.8.71

p.a.

cf

17/8

SECRET

SECRET

Reference.....

W1

Miss Beckett (Near Eastern Department)

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

I should be grateful for your comments on the attached memorandum. I am also sending copies for comment to Southern European Department (for para 29), Soviet Section of Research Department (for paras 37-38) and UN Section of Research Department (for para 47). When all comments within the office have been received a revised draft will be sent to the posts for comment.

2. I attach also the entered copy of the 1963 paper, in case you want to refer to it.

C.J.S. Rundle

(C.J.S. Rundle)

Research Department

R 716

25 May 1971

Mr. Rundle
Research Dept.

1. I have discussed this paper with Mr. Gertan and we both agree it is good. Our main reservation is about the conclusion, which we think a bit optimistic, especially in the light of recent developments. Mr. Gertan has made some suggestions, in the light of which you may wish to make further alterations.

2. The paper should now go to other NE posts (including Tehran, Ankara, Beirut (for Syrian

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RESEARCH M. 42
16 AUG 1971

Rf6/10.

[see para 50]

1/1
Kurdish aspect) and Residency Balwain. O.
NED may wish to comment again before the
memo is finalised.

3. Could we pl. speak early next week
about who shd arrange for typing &
despatch.

Reed to NED
27/5

Spoken.

p.a.

ch 1/6

2/10

Mr. P. R. R.
Resident Rep.

I have discussed this paper with Mr. Gordon
and we both agree it is good. Our main
concern is about the conclusion, which we
think a bit optimistic, especially in the light of
recent developments. Mr. Gordon has made
some suggestions, in the light of which we
may wish to make further alterations.
The paper should now go to other parts
(including Johnson, Arthur, Senior, & others)

[See p. 20]

SECRET

Reference.....

W1

Soviet Section (Mr. Chapman) ^{AS 1/6}

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

I should be grateful for any comments you may have on the attached draft memorandum, particularly paragraphs 37-38, which deal with the Soviet attitude to the Kurdish problem.

C. J. S. Rundle

(C.J.S. Rundle)

Middle East Section

R 716

25 May 1971

RECEIVED IN
N. 43
16 AUG 1971

RR6/10

1. I think some reference is needed in paragraph 38 to the part played by the Soviet Union in promoting the March 1970 settlement. You refer to this in the Conclusions (para. 54).

2. While it is difficult to be certain about the extent of the Soviet involvement, it is worth noting a public acknowledgement made in Moscow by Habib A. Korim, described as Secretary-General of the KDP Central Committee, and subsequently published by Pravda (28 April, 1970):

"Our Iraqi people — both Arabs & Kurds — value highly the noble efforts of the friendly Soviet Union in putting an end to the fratricidal war between the sons of this country and in re-establishing calm and peace in Iraq ..."

3. This was the first the Soviet public had heard of Soviet efforts in this direction. They will clearly have understood that by publishing the tribute in Pravda, the Soviet authorities were openly taking credit for bringing about the settlement.

Mr. Rundle

SECRET

K.A. Bishop -
Soviet Section.

1/6/71

I have agreed with
this point.
AS 1/6

SECRET

Reference.....

12/1

Southern European Department (Mr. Fearn)

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

I should be grateful for any comments on the attached memorandum which you may have, particularly on paragraph 29, which deals with Turkey's attitude to the Kurdish problem.

C.J.S. Rundle

(C.J.S. Rundle)

Research Department

R 716

25 May 1971

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GTT 11-43
16 AUG 1971

RL6/10

I am sorry to have held up this interesting paper. I have no comments on para 29, although I was not previously aware that the Turkish Govt had given material assistance to the Kurds.

P. Hearn 22/6

There is no firm evidence. I suggest we make no amendment but see what H.M. Embassy, Ankara have to say.

chl

On reflection, and re-examination, I have re-drafted the paragraph in question.

chl 6/8

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CONFIDENTIAL



file w. Mr Orchard

4

BRITISH RESIDENCY

BAHRAIN

14 September 1971

1/18

Mr Banner ✓

in attend to x

RR 6/10

E E Orchard Esq
Director of Research
Research Department
FCO

m. Ruyaleto
see 12

RECEIVED
REGISTRY
16 SEP 1971
RR 6/10

P.A. BU 27/9.
22/x
B 22/9

Dear Sir,

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963 - 1971

1. I am writing in Tim Everard's absence on leave to thank you for your letter RR6/10 of 6 September and to say that we have no comments on the draft Memorandum.
2. Your letter under reference does not actually state that a copy of the Memorandum has gone to the Embassy in Kuwait; but no doubt they have had one under separate cover.

Yours ever,

Trick

J N Elam



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London S.W.1

Research Department
Riverwalk House
Millbank
SW1P 4RR

RR 6/10

P G de Courcy Ireland, Esq
KUWAIT

20 September 1971

Dear de Courcy Ireland,

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

1. I enclose a draft Research Department memorandum on which we would welcome your comments.

2. Copies have also been sent to MacRae (Baghdad, Given (Beirut), Dodds (Ankara), Arbuthnott (Tehran), Everard (Bahrain) and Scott (Moscow).

Yours sincerely,

J. S. Armitage
J S Armitage

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No. RA 6/10

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DRAFT Letter

Type 1 + 2

To:— Mr. P. B. de Conway Ireland
Kuwait

From
J. S. Arncliffe
Telephone No. & Ext.
A. 432
Department
Research

THE KUADISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

1. I enclose a draft Research Department memorandum on which we would welcome your comments.
2. Copies have also been sent to Rachae (Baghdad), Grien (Beirut), Dadds (Amman), Arncliffe (Tel Aviv), Everard (Bakuin) and Scott (Moscow).

jsa.
20/9

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

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BRITISH EMBASSY
BAGHDAD

25 September

E E Orchard Esq OBE
Director of Research
Research Department
FCO
London



Amendments
made.

Mr. [Signature]
p.a. of 22/x

Dear Ted,

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

1. Thank you for your letter RR6/10 of 6 September to Christopher MacRae, who is now on leave. We have read the paper enclosed with your letter with great interest and offer the following comments.

2. The historical narrative in paragraphs 1 - 19 seems admirable. (In the first sentence of the Summary and in para 3 of the text, it would perhaps be better to say: "The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census)." There is also a misprint in the first line of para 17(xv) where "national" should read "natural".)

3. Para 9 of the summary and para 55 of the paper:

Both passages strike us as overdoing the "free to indulge in foreign adventures" theme. We would suggest amending the second sentence of para 9 to read ".... a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the regime to redispense the troops tied-up in the North and would perhaps encourage them to indulge". Similarly, at the end of para 10 of the summary we would suggest: ".... this would leave the Iraqi armed forces better able, if they were so minded, to indulge....".

4. The next sentence of para 9 of the summary - "While HMG have attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraqi Government" - should surely be prefaced with the words "in their attitude to the dispute". Without such modification, it reads rather surprisingly. The beginning of para 45 needs similar modification.

5. Para 20. The reference to the failure to appoint a Kurdish Vice-President or create a National Assembly would fit more neatly into para 22 under the narrative for 1971. We therefore suggest amending the second and third sentences of para 20 to read: "The amnesty was generally observed, five Kurdish Ministers were appointed, development activities educational fields. The difficulties over the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President and the creation of the National Assembly had still not been resolved in 1971 (see para 22)." In the last sentence, for "administration" read "self-administration".

- 1 -
SECRET

/6.



1/1

6. Para 21. For "main oil-bearing...." we would suggest: "present main oil-producing region of Iraq (although the country's large reserves are in the South)....". ✓

7. Para 22. Our understanding is that the non-appointment of the Kurdish Vice-President is due more to Barzani's reluctance to agree to the post being filled until he has more evidence that the agreement is working satisfactorily than to vacillation by the Government. The National Assembly has not yet been established because the Ba'ath have not been able to find a means of squaring the circle and creating an Assembly which the non-Ba'ath elements - principally the Kurds and the Communists - would be willing to join, and which would yet preserve Ba'athi control of the Government.

8. The fifth sentence of the paragraph (22) might therefore be expanded as follows: A

"In 1971 the Government at various times announced plans for economic development in the North, especially in the tourist field. Their relaxation of restrictions on members of the diplomatic corps travelling in the North suggested that they considered reconciliation to be proceeding smoothly enough. Nevertheless, the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President has still not taken place. It is believed that Barzani is unwilling to see the post filled until its functions are defined: if it is to be a sinecure, he sees no point in offering a hostage to the Ba'ath. The National Assembly has still not been created, despite forecasts in the President's speech at the 1971 celebrations of the July Revolution, because the Ba'ath have still been unable to formulate terms under which the non-Ba'athi elements - the Kurds and the Communists - would be prepared to participate in national political life, and which would not jeopardise the Ba'ath Party's supreme role to an unacceptable degree. There have ~~been~~ ^{were some} indications of a deterioration...." ✓ B

9. After the sixth sentence (of para 22) the following could be inserted: ".... in the Kurdish side. Indeed, the Committee's attempt to co-opt the Chief Editor of Al-Ta'akhi to membership was rebuffed." ✓

10. Para 26. We do not understand what is meant by the use of the term "revolutionary" in two places. The term should either be explained or omitted. ✓

Para 28. As in various passages the use of the present tense in the first sentence is misleading. (A rather similar instance ~~this is a~~ occurs in the third sentence of para 46 which might better read: common. ".... dealings in the past tended to be less circumspect because ~~difficulty~~ many Kurds in touch with rebel groups were allowed to circulate ~~preparing~~ freely and even participated".) ^{papers. I have made some}

/11. amendments.
CR



11. Para 41 et seq. A new paragraph could be added to the end of Section VI on the attitude of the Soviet Union, as follows:

"It is likely that the Soviet Union watched the deterioration in Arab/Kurdish relations during 1971 with misgivings. It was widely believed that the high-level Soviet mission which visited Iraq in June 1971 under the leadership of Novikov emphasised to the Ba'ath Government their concern that the 1970 Agreement should stick."

And similarly, the last sentence of para 57 could read: "She has undoubtedly played a part in promoting and probably also in maintaining the 1970 settlement."

12. Para 51. The reference to technical assistance is rather misleading, and we suggest rephrasing the paragraph as follows:

"HMG's policy of non-involvement meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid while fighting was in progress. A small technical assistance programme for Iraq was started in 1970, and Kurds, like all Iraqi citizens, are eligible for awards under it if they are nominated by the Iraqi Government. We have also presented books and equipment to Sulaimaniyah University. H M Embassy in Baghdad have also been in touch with War on Want to see if that body could provide medical supplies through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society."

*I presume you are still in Riverwalk.
Hope all goes well*

Yours,

J W Hutson

cc: E F Given Esq, Beirut
J Dodds Esq, Ankara
H J Arbuthnott, Tehran
T J Everard Esq, Bahrain
K B A Scott Esq, Moscow



BRITISH EMBASSY

MOSCOW

9.2. ch 22/x

1/30

1 October 1971

E E Orchard Esq
Research Dept
Riverwalk House
Millbank
SW1 P4RR



Dear Orchard, 4/10

KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

In the absence of Ken Scott, I am writing to thank you for your letter RR6/10 of 6 September, which enclosed a Department memorandum on the Kurdish problem. We have read this with much interest, and have no comment to make.

Yours ever,
Brian Barder

B L Barder

CONFIDENTIAL



Mr Bannister (8)

BRITISH EMBASSY

BEIRUT

9 October 1971

1/7

E E Orchard Esq
Research Department
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London SW1

1. *Mr Russell*
2. *Enter*

g.a. ch 22/x

Dear Ted,

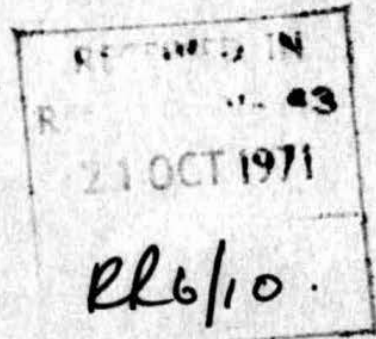
THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-71

1. Thank you for your letter RR 6/10 of 6 September enclosing a draft memorandum on the Kurdish Problem in Iraq, 1963-71.

2. We have no comments or suggested amendments for your draft.

Yours

John Given
E F Given



CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET



Sub - 2.1/10
Mc. S. 9
BRITISH EMBASSY
ANKARA
19 October 1971 *21/10.*

18/11

E E Orchard Esq OBE
Research Department
FCO
London SW1

RECEIVED IN REGISTRY - 43 21 OCT 1971 RK6/10.
--

Dear Sir,

The Kurdish Problem in Iraq, 1963-1971

Thank you for your letter RR 6/10 of 6 September to John Dodds who has now left Ankara.

2. It is perhaps questionable whether a passage on Kurds in Turkey is appropriate in a paper dealing with Kurds in Iraq. But if it is, your draft is factually correct as far as it goes. One could write more about the Kurds in Turkey but that would transform the paper. The Turks do not readily admit to their Kurds being a problem. They certainly could be and have been in the past. However, as the Prime Minister said on 1 May, a Kurdish uprising "is not an immediate danger" and that if it became one the Army could deal with it. This we believe to be correct. All Kurds are alleged to have "aspirations" but in Turkey it would be hazardous to speculate on how many of the two and a half million of them do and how many do not.

Yours ever
B R Berry
B R Berry

cc to J W Hutson Bagdad.
E F Given Esq Beirut
H J Arbuthnott Tehran
T J Everard Esq Bahrain
K B A Scott Esq Moscow

SECRET

COVERING SECRET

2/16

UNCLASSIFIED



BRITISH EMBASSY

TEHRAN

(10)

*Amendments incorporated.
P.A.*

ch 14/21

[Signature]

E E Orchard Esq CBE
Research Department
Foreign & Commonwealth Office

RECEIVED IN
REGISTRY NO. 43
17 NOV 1971

Received 4/11/71.

RR 6/10

Dear Orchard,

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ
1963 - 1971

(3)

1. Please refer to your letter (RR6/10) of 6 September to Hugh Arbuthnott. We have read your Memorandum with interest, and enclose a number of suggested amendments to passages which deal with the Iranian angle to the problem.
2. I hope that you will consider these of value.

Yours ever,

Nick Browne

N W Browne

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Reg. No.	DRAFT	Type 1 +
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	To:—	From
Top Secret. Secret. Confidential. Restricted. Unclassified.		Telephone No. & Ext.
PRIVACY MARKING		Department
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Add to end of paragraph 35:

"Most journalists visiting Iraqi Kurdistan over the past 8 years have entered Iraqi Kurdistan across the Iranian border with the connivance of the Iranian authorities."

Redraft of paragraphs 36 and 37: (now 37 and 38)

37. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq, and, if it lasts, will increase Iraq's ability to cause trouble in Iranian Kurdistan. Iran can therefore be expected to work against the settlement, which came as something of a blow to her interests. But the fact that she was unable to prevent it in the first place despite considerable (financial) pressure on Barzani, shows that she has only a limited influence and cannot force the Iraqi Kurds to take up arms again. However, Barzani is still in touch with the Iranians and if he decided that further hostilities were inevitable, he would look to Iran, as before, for money, arms and supplies. So long as Irano-Iraqi relations remain strained, it is likely that Iran would meet Barzani's requests.

New Paragraph 37:

38. At the moment the Kurds in Iran, who number about 1½ million, are comparatively quiescent, and the

/Iranian

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Iranian Government by a mixture of the carrot (land reform, TV station, radio programmes, etc.) and the stick (stern suppression of disturbances, exile of trouble makers etc) has fairly firm control over them. But there is still a legacy of discontent, stemming from the unsuccessful attempt to set up an independent Kurdish Republic in Iran in 1946, which could be exploited against the Iranian Government, particularly if the Iraqi Kurds were to achieve full autonomy or were to come to a permanent settlement with the Iraq Government. Therefore, while it is in Iran's interests that the Iraqi Kurds should be encouraged to fight the Iraq Government for what they want, it may not be in Iran's interests that they should be successful. The Iranian aim is to keep trouble firmly on the Iraqi side of the border.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

SECRET

SECRET

Minutes
REGISTERED
24 NOV 1971
RL 6/10

(11)

PUSD

✓
Would you please indicate whether we may use the gist of CX No. 163,0022 (R/ME/B) ^{of 1970} in a memorandum which we would intend to distribute within the office and to certain posts abroad, including Washington, Moscow, Ankara, Baghdad, Tehran, Kuwait, Cairo, Beirut, Bahrain, Jedda, Amman, Tel Aviv and New York (UN).

No
2. The memorandum would be classified SECRET, and if you wish it could also be UK EYES ONLY. If you do not wish this, could the memorandum be circulated to United States Agencies and given Commonwealth "W" distribution? It would not go to NATO.

C.J.S. Rundle

C.J.S. Rundle
Middle East Section,
Research Department
R 716 Tel R 74

9 November 1971

Mr Rundle (Research Dept: R 716)

*This is all right but
The memorandum will
have to be classified SECRET-
UK EYES ONLY
SECRET.*

[Signature]
(PUSD)

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

SECRET

REG. 24 NOV 1971
Minutes

re 6/10

(12)

Miss Beckett (Near Eastern Dept W133)

I have incorporated the comments from posts in the draft at Flag A. (I'm afraid it's rather messy by now.) Comments have not yet been received from Kuwait, but they can only be of marginal importance. Would you please let me have any further comments of your own.

2. PUSD have minuted that we may refer to the details of the secret agreement (paragraph 18) provided that the paper is classified SECRET - UK EYES ONLY. As some other aspects of the paper, such as HMG's policy and Iranian and Israeli aid, might have merited this classification anyway, I think this is the best thing to do.

3. The Embassy at Baghdad have not chosen to question our assertion (end of para 22 of the draft) that if Kurdish irritation at the rate of implementation of the agreement continues to grow there may soon be fighting serious enough to sabotage the agreement. I have added a bit about the attempt on Barzani's life, which must have clouded the atmosphere a bit; on the other hand, the fact that it did not provoke a strong reaction perhaps indicates that the Kurds are prepared to be patient a while longer.



C J S Rundle
Research Department
R 716

16 November 1971



CONFIDENTIAL COVERING SECRET
Reference

13

Mr Rundle

(Research
D)

Flag A

1 agree. I would like to have (to
keep) a copy of a complete fair re-type.
2. C. the paper be printed with a
little delay as possible or distributed

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ 1963-1971 <sup>widely (ME posts
plus selected others) before Xmas?</sup>

1. Please see the latest version of Mr Rundle's ^{signature} paper on the Kurds, incorporating views from posts. The paper now reads very well and I have only a few ²³ comments. _{xi}
2. I find it clumsy to have the conclusions between the summary and the main body of the paper. The reason for the present order is that some posts are to be circulated with the summary and conclusions only. This could surely still be done even if the conclusions were placed at the end, where they would fit in more naturally.
3. I suggest the following amendments (I have starred the passages concerned):
 - a. paragraph 2 of the Conclusions: delete "It is to the advantage of nearly all the parties", and insert "It is to the advantage of both the Iraqi Government and the Kurds themselves .." The passage as it stands at present is not entirely clear.
 - b. Paragraph 22: between "rebuffed," and "The situation" insert "There have also been reports that Barzani put further demands to the Iraqi Government this summer, including requests that ID150 per annum should be devoted to Kurdish areas and that a national assembly should be set up with one-third Kurdish members." Barzani's impatience with progress was also shown in his interview with the Beirut French newspaper, L'Orient Le Jour, on 18 November in which he said that he did not trust the Baghdad authorities and feared a surprise attack by the Iraqi army". A new paragraph should then begin at "The situation seems ..."
 - c. Paragraph 22: I suggest the final sentence should be redrafted as follows:

"The attempt to assassinate Barzani in September 1971, which is widely held to be the work of the Central Government, but for which the Baath leadership has officially denied responsibility ..."

Veronica Beckett

Veronica Beckett
Near Eastern Department

23 November 1971

DD 737719 557664 500M 2/71 GM 3643/2

CONFIDENTIAL COVERING SECRET

Reference.....

Mr. Orchard

1. I have now incorporated in the draft at Flag A comments from the posts and further comments by Near Eastern Department, as well as the majority of the suggested amendments which you pencilled in.
2. After discussing the first draft with you I moved the Conclusions to the beginning of the paper, but as Near Eastern Department would prefer them at the back (paragraph 2 of Miss Beckett's Minute below) I have put them back there. We could still include them in the "Summary Only" distribution if we wish. Apart from this, there seem to be no disagreements about the form or substance of the paper.
3. As Near Eastern Department have asked for copies of the fair re-type for their own immediate use, I should like to have the draft retyped as soon as you have approved it and consider questions of printing, distribution (including "Summary Only" distribution), security classification, etc., afterwards.

C.J.S. Rundle

C.J.S. Rundle

25 November 1971

J.A. Good.

This can be re-typed as far as necessary, or otherwise prepared for issue. Tell Mr Rundle. Let him prepare a distribution sheet for the long paper (not too many comments will catch it all) & the shorter version (summary & conclusions) for wider distribution. Are there any remaining complications about its security? I do not want to see again, possibly Mr. Rundle checks the typewritten, except 2/11. to initial for issue.

Registry
No. RR 6/10

DRAFT

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret.
~~Secret - UK Eyes Only~~
Confidential.
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Unclassified.

To:—

(RA 6/10)

(7 December, 1971)

Director of Research

From

Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

In Confidence

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM¹⁷ (Abridged version)

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

(Abstract + Summary)

~~SUMMARY~~

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census). There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued.

~~(Paragraphs 1-5)~~

2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965.

~~(Paragraphs 6-10)~~

3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but

/when

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-7 DEC 1971

when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded. ~~(Paragraphs 11-13)~~

4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, including the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, remain unresolved. ~~(Paragraphs 14-23)~~

5. Apart from tribal rivalries, a division exists within the Kurdish ranks between the tribal elements led by Barzani and the Left-wing urban elements represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. Talabani and Ahmad were expelled from the Kurdish Democratic Party ~~(Party)~~ in 1964 and since then Barzani's authority has been supreme; but if a firm peace were established the radical elements would be likely to make their influence felt again. ~~(Paragraphs 24-27)~~

6. Organisation of the Kurdish army: ^{it} has employed guerrilla tactics with success. ~~(Paragraphs 28-30)~~

7. Attitudes of other countries in the region. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who, with a Kurdish population of some 3 million, have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance, originally in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds and more

/generally

generally in order to weaken the Iraq Government. Israel has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret. ~~(Paragraphs 34-39)~~

8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid. ~~(Paragraphs 40-42)~~

9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; the reverse side of the coin, however, is that a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the Iraqi régime to redispense troops tied up in the North and would perhaps encourage them to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf area. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the ^{actual} delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces in order to hinder their use against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have, ^{mistakenly} ~~wrongly~~, suspected HMG of cooperating with Iran in supplying the Kurds with arms. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place. ~~(Paragraphs 44-53)~~

/conclusions

122

CONCLUSIONS

10. ~~Conclusions~~ Some progress has been made in implementing the 1970 settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Kurdish forces (*Kurdish Democratic Party* Pish Merga) and the ~~PDF~~, have yet to be resolved in detail. It is far from certain how long the settlement will survive and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of its implementation is growing. If this continues, there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

11. It is to the advantage of both the Iraq Government and the Kurds themselves that the settlement should endure. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house ~~as long as~~ ^{when} the Kurds are in rebellion. For Britain, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

12. The reverse side of the coin is that, with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country, Iraq may be encouraged to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf (particularly in the period after British military withdrawal), or on the "Eastern front" with Israel. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it, paradoxically, a potential threat to stability in other areas of the Middle East. It is
/least

least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraqi régime, and ^{to} Kuwait, who remains suspicious of Iraqi territorial ambitions despite Iraq's formal acceptance in 1963 of Kuwait's independence within the 1932 frontier.

13. If a permanent settlement is achieved by the Kurds in Iraq this could awaken the aspirations of the Kurdish populations of Iran and Turkey. In Iran the Kurds are comparatively quiescent at present, but in Turkey the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in April 1971.

14. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as ^{the security} ~~that~~ of Iraq herself. But the Soviet Union chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world ^{and} has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She ~~has~~ undoubtedly played a part in promoting, and probably also in maintaining, the 1970 settlement.

15. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by

/Mulla

Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically-minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

~~Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March 1970.~~

Note: The full paper has been circulated to consumers most likely to have an interest in the details. Copies are available on request.

Middle East Section,
Research Department,
Foreign & Commonwealth
Office

Registry
No. RR 6/10

DRAFT

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret.
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To:—

From

Telephone No. & Ext.

Departmental Series No 17

(AA 6/10) Issued
(6 December, 1971) H. D. N.
Director of Research

PRIVACY MARKING

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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

SUMMARY

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census). There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mullā Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued. (Paragraphs 1-5)

2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965.

(Paragraphs 6-10)

3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but /when

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when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded. (Paragraphs 11-13)

4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, including the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, remain unresolved. (Paragraphs 14-23)

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6. Organisation of the Kurdish army. It has employed guerrilla tactics with success. (Paragraphs 28-30)

7. Attitudes of other countries in the region. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who, with a Kurdish population of some 3 million, have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance, originally in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds and more

/generally

generally in order to weaken the Iraq Government. Israel has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret. (Paragraphs 31-39)

8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid. (Paragraphs 40-42)

9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; the reverse side of the coin, however, is that a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the Iraqi régime to redispense troops tied up in the north and would perhaps encourage them to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf area. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces in order to hinder their use against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have, ^{mistakenly,} ~~wrongly~~ suspected HMG of cooperating with Iran in supplying the Kurds with arms. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place. (Paragraphs 44-53)

10. ~~Conclusions. (Paragraphs 54-59)~~ It is for ~~from certain how long the 1970 settlement will survive. (Paragraphs 54-59)~~

Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March 1970.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Department Memorandum LR 6/9G of 1963 surveyed the Kurdish problem in Iraq between 1958 and 1963. The present memorandum examines developments since 1963.

2. There are probably between 6 and 7 million Kurds in the Middle East. Their racial origins are obscure; they combine the physical characteristics of various races. Their language, however, is of Indo-European origin and bears a close relation to Persian. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, although a few tribes are Shi'i. A hardy and dour mountain race with a reputation for brigandage, they have never been united politically as one people but have mostly lived a tribal life with its attendant disputes and differing dialects and customs. "Kurdistan" - the area inhabited by them as a more or less homogeneous community constituting the majority of the population - is at present divided between Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with small overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union.⁽¹⁾

3. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census) - a larger percentage than in any other country. Thanks partly to the

/mountainous

(1) The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) envisaged the setting up of an autonomous Kurdistan, but was never ratified because of Turkish opposition. Instead, the Kurds found themselves divided by the international frontiers of Turkey, Iraq and Syria where under the Ottoman Empire only provincial boundaries had existed.

mountainous nature of their terrain, they have managed to maintain a large degree of independence from the central Government. In the tribal areas their basic desire is to maintain this independence and to be free to continue their traditional way of life - farming and herding - without interference. For the urban elements, however, which now make up about a quarter of the Kurdish population in Iraq, the question of equality of opportunity within the Iraqi State has become increasingly important in recent years. The demands of the Iraqi Kurds therefore include at one and the same time autonomy for the Kurdish region and full rights for themselves as Iraqi citizens. The establishment of an independent Kurdistan uniting all the Kurds at present divided by international frontiers is not an immediate aim,⁽¹⁾ though it has long been the dream of almost every Kurd.

4. During the period of British administration (1920-1932) steps were taken to improve conditions among the Kurds in Iraq, but efforts to establish a special administration for Kurdish districts were hampered by a series of tribal revolts. When Iraq became fully
/independent

(1) The 1966 Programme of the Kurdish Democratic Party stated that the Kurds were fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic".

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independent in 1932 she made a formal declaration to the League of Nations guaranteeing the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. This guaranteed them equality before the law with other Iraqi nationals and stipulated, inter alia, areas in which Kurdish was to be an official ^{side by side with} ~~language in addition to~~ Arabic and in which officials should if possible be Kurds. It also promised the allocation of official funds for the provision of primary education in the Kurdish language. The Government, ^{did little to} ~~however, rather than honouring~~ this declaration ^{and} ~~concerned~~ itself primarily with enforcing its authority in Kurdistan. Kurdish discontent led to a number of uprisings, the most serious of which was led by the tribal leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani in 1943-1945. He was defeated by the Iraqi army, aided by tribes in Government pay, and fled to Iran, where he joined the short-lived Kurdish "Republic of Mahabad". After its collapse he made his way with a number of his followers to the Soviet Union.

5. When Qasim deposed the monarchy in 1958 he ^{gave} ~~made~~ the Kurds promises of equality with the Arab population of Iraq and allowed Barzani to return from exile. After an initial period of cooperation, however, Kurdish opinion hardened against the Government because of its neglect of their

/interests

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interests and its arming of tribes hostile to the Barzanis. In July 1961 the Barzanis took to arms and defeated these enemies. Supported by other tribes and by members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, they then proceeded to take over Government posts in the north. By the end of August the semi-circle of mountains from north-west of Mosul to south-east of Kirkuk was effectively under Kurdish control. Barzani then presented Qasim with a number of demands, including autonomy for the Kurds, to which Qasim replied by launching a full-scale military offensive against the Kurds in September. Hostilities continued intermittently until Qasim's fall in February 1963, neither side gaining a decisive advantage. The Government forces held the main towns in the north - Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimaniya - but the Kurds controlled most of the rest of their territory.

II. THE KURDISH WAR, 1963-1969

The 1963 Ba'athist campaign

6. Almost immediately after the Ba'ath Party came to power in February 1963 a cease-fire was arranged. Negotiations began in the following month, when it was announced that the Government were prepared to grant the Kurds "national rights on the basis of decentralisation". Kurdish demands for a share in oil revenues and other State revenues on a per capita basis and the exclusion of Arab troops

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in the way
what?
We have not got
reliable details of

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from Kurdistan proved unacceptable to the Government and, although they made counter-proposals, it soon became apparent that the negotiations were getting nowhere. In June the Government threw a Kurdish delegation into prison and launched a new military offensive. This was managed with more drive than had been displayed under Qasim, ^{and was} as well ~~as being~~ more ruthless and bloody. But by the time winter closed in the army had secured control of only a small ^r faction of the mountainous area of Kurdistan and it was evident that the Government had little hope of imposing a military solution.

The 1964 negotiations and Barzani's dispute with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani

7. In February 1964 a cease-fire was announced between the Kurds and the Government, which, since the ousting of the Ba'ath in November 1963, had been Nasserist in complexion. An official statement by President Arif promised the Kurds national rights "in a single fraternal national unity", proclaimed a general amnesty, and pledged the Government to undertake the rehabilitation of the north and reinstate Kurdish officials and employees there. There followed innumerable visits to the north by Government representatives in an attempt to get the Kurds to accept something less than autonomy.

8. The Kurds ~~themselves~~ meanwhile split into two main factions. The first, led by

/Barzani

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Barzani, who was both the dominant tribal leader and Chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), took the view that every effort must be made to test the Government's sincerity and see whether an agreement could be reached. The second, a group of younger and more radically inclined KDP members led by Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani, early came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained from dealings with the Government. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the KDP at Qala Diza in July 1964, reportedly attended by some 900 delegates, at which 14 senior party members, including Ahmad and Talabani and all but one of the party's Politbureau, were formally expelled and a new Politbureau was elected. An armed clash then took place between the rival groups, as a result of which Ahmad and Talabani fled to Iran with some 400 of their supporters. (They were given sanctuary at Hamadan by the Iranian authorities).

The 1965 campaign

9. After more than a year of truce, marked by increasingly desultory negotiations, hostilities were resumed by the Government in the first week of April, 1965. By then most of the dissident Kurdish group had made their peace with Barzani and returned from Iran, though Ibrahim Ahmad remained there unreconciled and Talabani spent the summer abroad

/trying

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trying
to rally international support for the
Kurdish cause.

10. The 1965 campaign went no better for the Government than previous ones and by the end of the year it was once again evident that deadlock had been reached on the military front. (1)

The Bazzaz proposals, 1966

11. Early in 1966 there were indications that Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, who in the previous autumn had been appointed Iraq's first civilian Premier since the 1958 revolution, was in favour of negotiating peace with the Kurds rather than mounting a new spring offensive. His advice was overruled and a new offensive began in May, but the Government forces almost immediately suffered a severe setback near Rowanduz and early in June the campaign was called off.

12. On 29 June 1966 Dr Bazzaz announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. His twelve points were, in summary:

(1) Equal national rights for Kurds and Arabs in Iraq.

(ii) Decentralisation: elected local assemblies to have wide powers.

/(iii)

(1)

Two notable features of this campaign were Kurdish accusations that poison gas was used and the presence of UAR troops in a camp near Baghdad (under the auspices of the Iraq-UAR Joint Military Command), which helped to release Iraqi troops from internal security duties to take part in the war.

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(iii) Kurdish to be recognised as an official language, side by side with Arabic, in areas where the Kurds formed a majority.

(iv) Kurdish representation in a National Assembly on a proportional basis.

(v) Public offices and appointments to be open to Kurds.

(vi) Equality of educational opportunity.

(vii) A measure of political freedom and freedom of expression for the Kurds.

(ix) A general amnesty and reinstatement of Kurdish officials and employees.

(x) Kurdish members of the armed forces and police to report to their units. Others under arms to surrender their weapons.

(xi) Rehabilitation of the North.

(xii) Resettlement of displaced individuals and groups.

113.

~~43. The impression created by this declaration was that it was a blueprint for an eventual settlement rather than a settlement in itself. Much of its phraseology~~

~~was~~

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+
What this
intention - if x
The question one might ask
is whether it provided an
adequate basis for a
settlement. ✓

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Perhaps I put -
but points i-xii
are fully covered as
you put them.
Explain.

why, in view
of what you say
deleted. (We know
little about this) or

i.e. were there
some? discrepancy
is not hostilities.

SECRET

13. Although the plan was vague in parts and left a great deal
unsaid, it seemed to provide an adequate basis for a settlement.

~~vague~~
~~was ambiguous and it left a great deal un-~~
~~said.~~ (1) It was felt, nevertheless, that
as long as Bazzaz remained in office there
was a fair chance of progress. The ~~Kurds~~ ^{plan}
~~themselves seemed pleased with the proposals,~~
~~which were~~ ^{was} officially welcomed by Barzani. ~~By~~
~~mid-July, however, the Kurds~~ ^{however, the Kurds}
~~they were becoming~~
disillusioned by lack of any positive signs
of implementation, and when Bazzaz was
dismissed in August hopes of a settlement
faded.

Continued stalemate in 1967

14. Although full-scale hostilities were
not resumed in 1966 or 1967, Government
~~and were involved in some skirmishes with Kurdish forces~~
forces remained deployed in the north. The
Government endeavoured to weaken Barzani's
position by giving support to Talabani, who
had again broken with him; sporadic armed
clashes took place between the rival Kurdish
groups, but Talabani's faction was too weak
to present a serious challenge to Barzani's
authority.

The return of the Ba'ath, 1968

15. The Ba'athist Government which came to
/power

- (1) According to Ismet Sharif Vanly (Le
Kurdistan Irakien, Entité National,
Neuchatel 1970) there were also three
secret clauses in which the Government
undertook
(a) to create a new Liwa of Dohuk,
comprising the Kurdish area then within
the Liwa of Mosul,
(b) to free all political prisoners in
Iraq, and
(c) to legalise the Kurdish Democratic
Party.

SECRET

SECRET

power in July 1968 did not at first show any sign of having better ideas on how to deal with the Kurds than those which the previous Ba'athist Government had had in 1963 or those which other administrations had applied in the interim. They thus continued the policy ^{from the previous Government} which they had inherited/ of containing the extent of the area controlled by the Kurds and supporting Talabani's faction with money and arms.

16. After a time, however, they began to give effect to certain of the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966. Thus Kurdish was made the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish areas; a university was established in Suleimaniya; a Kurdish Academy of Letters was set up; an amnesty was declared for those who had taken part in the fighting; and a measure of decentralisation of power to the governorates was introduced. In spite of these propitiatory gestures, skirmishing continued throughout 1969.

III. THE MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT

17. ^{By} ~~In~~ January 1970 it became ^{evident} ~~apparent~~ that serious negotiations were taking place between the Ba'ath and representatives of Barzani under cover of a de facto cease-fire. The successful outcome of these negotiations was announced by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command

/Council

SECRET

From whom? the main Govt.
Did they know me?
the Bay's proposals?
No

tribal or
with Govt forces?
Both of

[implication?]

[Last case then
no negotiation was
proposed in 3/16
(in 1968-9)]

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Council on 11 March. The terms of the announcement⁽¹⁾ followed fairly closely the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966 and contained the following main points:

(i) The Kurds were to enjoy political rights and autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic. The areas of Kurdish autonomy were to be determined by an official census.

(ii) The existence of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd, was to be recognised in the Constitution.

(iii) A Kurd was to be appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

(iv) The Kurds were to share in the legislative power on a proportional basis.

(v) The Kurds were to participate in the Government and in Government departments without discrimination.

(vi) Officials in Kurdish areas were to be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language.

(vii) Kurdish and Arabic were both to be official languages in the Kurdish areas; Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in these areas.

/(viii)

(1) For a more detailed text of the announcement see *Annex to this memorandum.*

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(viii) All former Kurdish military and civil officials, students and workers were to be reinstated.

(ix) Educational and cultural facilities for Kurds were to be expanded.

(x) The Kurds were to have their own organisations for students, youth, women and teachers, affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

(xi) Inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages were to be restored to their former homes.

(xii) Relief measures for Kurds affected by the hostilities were to be put in hand.

(xiii) A Kurdish development commission with an adequate budget was to be established and a special economic plan for the Kurdish region was to be prepared.

(xiv) Agrarian reform was to be speeded up in Kurdish areas.

(xv) The exploitation of ~~natural~~ resources in the autonomous area was to be the responsibility of the Republican authorities.

(xvi) The Kurdish broadcasting station and all heavy weapons were to be surrendered during the final stages of the implementation of the agreement.

18. The published agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol ^{reportedly} containing the following provisions:

/(1)

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(i) A joint committee was to be set up to supervise implementation of the agreement.

(ii) One of the tasks of this committee would be to resettle the Pish Merga (Kurdish rebel forces), ~~whose number was to be reduced to about 6,000 men~~ *except for about 6,000 men who would remain in the force.*

During the period of resettlement, which would be in five unspecified stages, the Government would pay for the general upkeep of the force.

(iii) The Government would disarm and disband all Kurdish forces opposed to Barzani, and the Iraqi armed forces would withdraw to their "normal positions".

(iv) The KDP was to be allowed to operate freely in the Kurdish region and to publish its own newspaper.

(v) All persons ~~formerly in Government~~ service who took part in the Kurdish rebellion would be permitted to resume employment without loss of seniority. Those who had served with the Kurdish armed forces would be permitted to count that service as if they had served in the Iraqi armed forces.

(vi) A nation-wide census would take place within one year to define the region of Kurdish majority.

(vii) Although the Iraqi national flag could not be altered immediately, ~~to incorporate a Kurdish symbol, this would be done when next as soon as the flag was changed.~~ *would be incorporated*

SECRET

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*ie. it was not
wholly resettled
+ 6,000 could remain
permanently?*

when next

19. Although the secret clauses went some way towards removing obscurities in the published terms, some important points, such as the exact nature of Kurdish autonomy and the amount to be allocated by the Iraq Government for the development of the Kurdish region, remained to be clarified; it was evident that further negotiation would be needed on these and other points before the settlement could be considered comprehensive.

20. Progress in implementing the agreement during 1970 was not speedy. The amnesty was generally observed, development activities began in Kurdistan, and a number of gestures

were made by the Government in the cultural and educational fields. ^{On the other hand the difficulties} ~~But although five~~ ^{over the appointment of a Kurdish} ~~Kurds were appointed Ministers the promised~~ ^{Vice-President and the creation of} ~~Kurdish Vice-President was not appointed, and~~ ^{a National Assembly had still not been} ~~the establishment of a National Assembly in~~ ^{resolved in 1971 (see paragraph 22 below)} ~~which the Kurds might have proportional~~

~~representation remained as far away as ever.~~

The Government withdrew their support from Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad, who made their submission to Barzani and formally merged their "Kurdish Revolutionary Party" with the KDP. A number of the Pish Merga returned to their civilian occupations and a number were formed into a Kurdish frontier force under the Ministry of ^{the} Interior, but Barzani retained some 20,000 men under arms and kept both his heavy weapons and his broadcasting /station.

five Kurdish
Ministers were
appointed,

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station. (In March 1971 it was reported that he had handed them over, but in fact he retained the major part of his serviceable equipment.) The future of the KDP, which was among the questions not satisfactorily spelt out in the agreement, remained unresolved; declarations of its identity of outlook with the Ba'ath were issued from time to time but no practical links were forged. A clear-cut picture of future administrative arrangements within Kurdistan also failed to emerge: there can be little doubt that by "autonomy" the Government meant no more than a modest measure of regional self-administration, whereas the Kurds intended it to mean a good deal more.

21. The all-important question of the physical extent of the area of Kurdish autonomy, which was to be determined by a census, also remained unresolved; the census was announced for October 1970 but was postponed sine die shortly before the appointed date. The main difficulty in fixing the boundary concerned the status of the governorate of Kirkuk, which contains the main oil-producing region of Iraq (although the country's large reserves are in the south) and has a mixed population of Turkomans, Kurds and Arabs. (The position is complicated by the fact that many Kurdish families were driven from their homes during hostilities and Arabs ^{were} ~~have been~~ settled in their place.) While accepting in March ¹⁹⁷⁰ that the exploitation of the oilfields should be under the jurisdiction of the central Government, the Kurds have long insisted that

/Kirkuk

Kirkuk should be their capital and are not prepared to accept its exclusion from the autonomous region. The Government, for their part, could hardly be expected to accept a boundary which left the oilfields on the wrong side of the line. Given the impossibility of the two sides agreeing on this point it was perhaps as well in the short term that the census was postponed, since the passions which would have been aroused by it on both sides might have jeopardised the implementation of other parts of the agreement. In the long term, however, no settlement is likely to be permanent unless the territorial question is solved.

22. The postponement of the census did not immediately provoke a reaction from the Kurds. Their first priority was evidently to see that the Government went ahead with reconstruction and development in the north and it was felt that as long as progress continued to be made in this and other fields they would continue to observe the truce, though their patience might not be inexhaustible. The Government, for their part, needing the stability that ~~the cessation of hostilities~~ ~~a settlement~~ could bring, favoured a policy of reconciliation. (It is noteworthy in this connexion that the political reputation of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the strong man of the Iraqi Ba'ath, is to some extent linked to the March 1970 agreement, which he brought about in the face of considerable opposition from within the party.) In 1971 the Government at various times announced plans for economic development in the North, especially in the tourist field. Their

/relaxation

relaxation of restrictions on members of the diplomatic corps travelling in the North suggested that they considered reconciliation to be proceeding smoothly enough. Nevertheless, the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President has still not taken place. (It is believed that Barzani is unwilling to see the post filled until its functions are defined: if it is to be a sinecure, he sees no point in offering a hostage to the Ba'ath.) ^{Now has the} The National Assembly ~~has still not~~ been created, despite forecasts in the President's speech at the 1971 celebrations of the July Revolution, ~~because~~ (The Ba'ath have still been unable to formulate terms under which the non-Ba'athi elements - the Kurds and the Communists - would be prepared to participate in national political life, and which would not jeopardise the Ba'ath Party's supreme rôle to an unacceptable degree.) ^{in a specific} There were ^{during} some indications of a deterioration in Kurdish-Government relations ⁱⁿ 1971, such as a dispute over the status of the Feili Kurds - a tribe mainly of Iranian origin (and citizenship), many of whom work as labourers and porters in Baghdad and who were claiming Iraqi citizenship - and reports of skirmishes in the north in which pro-Talabani tribes appear to have been involved. Presumably in response to Kurdish complaints, the Government set up a new Higher Committee for Kurdish Affairs in May, with the ostensible purpose of implementing the ¹⁹⁷⁰ ~~March~~ agreement more actively, but, since none of its members was a /Kurd,

Kurd, it can hardly have inspired much confidence in the Kurdish side; indeed, the Committee's attempt to co-opt the Chief Editor of Al-Ta'akhi was rebuffed. There ^{were} ~~have been~~ reports that Barzani ^{had} put further demands to the Iraq Government ^{during the} ~~this~~ summer, including requests that ID 150 per annum should be devoted to Kurdish areas and that a ~~National~~ Assembly should be set up with one-third Kurdish membership. ↓ Barzani's ~~impatience with progress~~ ^{feelings were} was also shown in his ~~an~~ interview with the Beirut French newspaper, L'Orient le Jour, on 18 November, in which he said that he did not trust the Baghdad authorities and feared a surprise attack by the Iraqi army.

23. ^{in short,} The situation seems almost to have reached an impasse again, and ~~in the light of past experience~~ it appears unlikely that a solution to the outstanding problems will be found. If Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of implementation of the agreement continues to grow, there may soon be further outbreaks of fighting serious enough ^{cumulatively,} to render the settlement a dead letter. ^{finally,} The attempt to assassinate Barzani in September 1971, which ^{was} ~~is~~ widely held to have been the work of the central Government, but for which the Ba'ath leadership officially denied responsibility, ^{must} ~~will~~ have increased the suspicion with which Barzani has always regarded the Baghdad Government and ~~may have~~ set back further the process of reconciliation.

/IV

IV POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH REVOLT

Political

24. Since 1961, when Barzani established himself as the dominant tribal leader and the KDP joined forces with him, the Iraqi Kurds have presented a more united front than during previous revolts. The feud which has continued on and off since 1964 between Barzani on the one hand and Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad on the other, however, is a symptom of the difference of outlook which separates the tribal population of the mountainous north from the urban population of the south of Kurdistan and the intellectuals in Baghdad and elsewhere. As long as the settlement remains incomplete and Barzani remains in reasonable health - he is now nearly 70 years of age - his position as the overall leader of the Iraqi Kurds is unlikely to be challenged,⁽¹⁾ but if a lasting peace is made serious divisions within the Kurdish ranks are likely to

/reappear.

(1) Vanli, op cit, describes Barzani as both a protector of the traditional chiefs vis-à-vis the party radicals and a "catalyst of all the national forces". A national hero since the days of the Mahabad Republic and his exile in the Soviet Union, ~~he~~ **BARZANI** has unrivalled experience as leader of the Kurdish national movement and is at his best in a crisis. But his vision is limited and he can be stubborn and inflexible. His personal ideas as to future political arrangements in Kurdistan seem to be vague.

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NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Officially, no; but
there have been
reports of renewed
Govt. aid to pro-Talabani
tribes.

do they go
on doing this
Ct x in 120.

i.e. you think the
KRP is self-interest
motivated? Could it not
re-emerge, or on the
long run? It's a
different
It could re-emerge, but as
in essence a splinter group of the
KDP it would not be able to
effectively challenge the KDP.
The KDP is more likely to
be a political
movement than a
political
movement.

reappear. The tribal leaders, who
will not necessarily remain united
among themselves, will ~~naturally~~
^{prefer} wish to see their authority ~~being~~
~~maintained~~ in Kurdistan, whereas
the more radical elements will want
to see the KDP playing a dominant
role in the administration of the
area and pursuing progressive
policies, including social and
agrarian reform. In the long term
the intelligentsia could find that
they have more in common with the
Arab socialists in Baghdad than with
their ~~own tribal~~ kinsmen; this in
part explains Talabani's ~~separate part~~
dealings with the Baghdad
authorities.

/25.

~~Since the KDP is the only
Kurdish political organisation in
Iraq, any future struggle for
control of the Kurdish movement
is likely to centre on it. Its~~

/programme, (1)

SECRET

programme, (1) adopted in 1964 and revised in 1966, is decidedly Left-wing in tone, but this is in part a legacy from the old programme adopted in Qasim's time. Since 1964, when Barzani moved against its Left-wing Politbureau, the party has been largely subordinate to his authority, and in the last elections to its central committee, in July 1970, Right-wing members came out on top. But the firmer peace becomes, and the more active the party is able to become politically, the more are radical elements likely to make their influence

/felt

- (1) Article 2 of the programme states that the party is "a democratic, revolutionary and avant-garde party which represents the interests of the workers, peasants, salaried persons, artisans and revolutionary intellectuals of Iraqi Kurdistan". Article 3 states that the party is fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic". Article 5 states that the party has recourse to "the progressive scientific doctrines which correspond to the realities of our Kurdish people". Article 6 states that the party is fighting for the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Iraq and for freedom of speech, religion, political organisation, etc. Article 13 demands the allocation of a percentage of Iraq's oil revenues to Kurdistan, proportionate to its population. Article 14 advocates agrarian reform in Kurdistan, specially adapted to the conditions there and aimed at establishing a minimum acreage for each peasant and abolishing the feudal system; it also suggests ways of modernising agriculture in Kurdistan. Article 16 contains a section on taxes, which should be "just and based on direct and progressive taxes on income and hereditary wealth and on the reduction of indirect taxes, which hit the working classes". Other articles concern the development of industry and communications, the development of Kurdish culture and education, the adoption of a "non-aligned" and "anti-imperialist" foreign policy, etc.

~~While a substantial part of the programme is~~
~~not a substantial part of the programme~~
~~the revised~~

what is the other part, which could be more realistic / significant statements about it being a revolutionary party etc. & point 25
This is, (Can this be put in better chronological + sequence?)

This seems radical / only by long standards?
nationalistic / tribalistic

radical?

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Ed. (3746)

Registry
No.

DRAFT

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

To:—

From

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential.
Restricted.
Unclassified.

Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

25. Since the KDP is the only Kurdish political organisation in Iraq, any future struggle for control of the Kurdish movement is likely to take place within it. It is essentially a nationalist party without a coherent ideology. In the early days of Qasim's rule it associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, but their influence has probably been negligible since 1960, when the party was purged; at the same time the Communist bias in its programme was watered down. The new programme adopted in 1964, which was revised in 1966, is fairly radical in emphasis⁽¹⁾; ^{but} some of its language appears to be a legacy from the old programme adopted in Qasim's time.

26. Since 1964, when Barzani moved against Talabani and other Left-wing members of the Politbureau, the party has been largely subordinate to his authority, and in the last elections to the party's Central Committee, in July 1970, Right-wing members came out on top. If a ~~really~~ ^{were} firm peace ~~is~~ ^{is} established, however, and the party ~~is~~ ^{were} able to become more active politically, ~~it~~ ^{they} ~~is to be expected that~~ ^{probably} the more radical elements ~~would~~ make their influence increasingly felt within it.

(1) [Footnote on previous page]

SECRET

~~felt within it.~~

25. Although in the early days of Qasim's rule the KDP associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, their influence ^{probably} has been negligible since 1960, when the party was purged; at the same time the Communist bias in the party's programme was watered down. A number of members of the Committee for the Defence of Kurdistan - the Kurdish students' association in Europe - have Communist leanings, but they are not in the mainstream of the Kurdish movement, which is essentially nationalist and opportunist in character.

26. The organisation ^{at} framework of the Kurdish revolt is complex, covering as it does a large and varied geographical area and many disparate elements of population. The principal organs of Kurdish authority in the period 1966-1970 were the Revolutionary Council, the Executive Bureau and the KDP Politbureau. Vanli⁽¹⁾ describes the Revolutionary Council as a kind of elected parliament of 62 members, which exercises supreme authority and meets every four months (or more frequently if requested /by the

(1) op. cit. Appendices VII and VIII of this book contain French translations of the texts of the Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Revolution and the Administrative Law of the Revolution, both dated 17 October 1964.

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can be before this
And checked

Is it a single
organisation, with
single control?
I think para
26-29 show that
it is not. I suggest we
leave "organizational
framework" to suggest
looseness.

by the President, by a majority of its own members, or by the Executive Bureau). The Executive Bureau he describes as a Ministerial Cabinet responsible for controlling all the ~~organs of the Kurdish revolt,~~ ~~Kurdish revolutionary organs,~~ including the army. Considerable influence is exerted on it by the KDP Politbureau, which designates a number of its members ⁽¹⁾ ~~apparently a majority.~~ (This is where the formal link between the KDP and the ~~revolutionary~~ ~~any~~ administration as a whole is to be found). Barzani is Chairman of all three ~~above~~ bodies, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and is thus in a position to dominate the whole machine.

Military

28. ~~The Kurdish rebel forces (Dish Merga)~~
~~The Iraqi Kurds can mobilize some 25,000 men,~~
~~number some 25,000 when fully mobilized.~~ Arms
 in their possession include rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, and some artillery pieces. They also possess radio equipment and some motor transport. A substantial proportion of their small arms have been captured or stolen from the Iraqi army. Most of the rest, and the majority of their heavier weapons, were supplied
 /by Iran

- (1) Other members of the Executive Bureau are representatives of the military, the tribes, other civilians, and the Christian (Assyrian) community. The Politbureau itself is elected from among members of the KDP Central Committee, which is elected by a congress of KDP members.

do you know it?
 rough proportion?
 Estimates vary, but
 Vanki in one place
 says it is a majority.
 R

[The Kurdish Iraqi
 Kurds can mobilize
 some 25,000 men?]

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by Iran and Israel between 1963 and 1966. They may also have received some arms from Czechoslovakia, but not on the same scale.

29. In the late sixties the Pish Merga were reportedly divided into ten "brigades", recruited on a local basis and enjoying a great deal of independence. Their activities were not fully co-ordinated, though a degree of central control was exercised by Barzani as Commander-in-Chief. Their effectiveness was to some extent limited by their reluctance to operate outside their regions. (On the other hand, the small groups used by the Kurds for commendo activities are extremely mobile considering the nature of the terrain.)

Barzani himself, who had round him a guard of tribesmen some 200 strong, was constantly on the move during the hostilities in order to escape detection. (His family was usually with him. His third son, Idris, acted as his aide de camp.)

30. Kurdish military organisation seems to have improved considerably between 1963 and 1966 as the result partly of Israeli instruction and partly of an influx of Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi army. During hostilities the Kurds employed guerrilla tactics with fair success, not attempting to hold towns but drawing the Iraqi army on into the mountains and harassing it there. Ground lost in the summer was usually regained in the winter, when snow and rain presented the Government forces with severe difficulties. For the Kurds hostilities were essentially

/defensive

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY

defensive in nature, aimed partly at keeping open their supply routes from Iran. They did not take advantage of every opportunity to discomfit the Iraqi army; nor did they make as much use as they might of the weapon of sabotage, to which the oil installations in the Kirkuk area in particular are extremely vulnerable (see paragraph 4⁵ below). Confinement of the fighting to the hills, with no attempt to control the major towns, suited Barzani since he ~~has~~^{was} thereby ~~been~~ able to maintain a claim for tribal structure in the administration.

V ATTITUDES OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO THE KURDISH PROBLEM

Syria

31. In 1963, when Ba'athist régimes were in power in both Baghdad and Damascus, the Syrians sent about two brigades of troops openly to Iraq to assist in the Kurdish war and published propaganda about helping Iraq to free herself of "separatists and bandits". Since 1963 the two countries have not been on good terms and Syria has pursued a policy of non-involvement in the dispute. Although Syrian Kurds are thought to have helped their Iraqi brethren financially and there has been some coming and going over the Syrian border during hostilities, the Syrian authorities have kept a fairly tight rein on Kurdish activities. Kurdish nationalism is no longer considered a live

/issue

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY

SECRET

issue within Syria, the Kurds there being too few to carry much weight (about 300,000).

Turkey

39. Turkey has not involved herself openly in the dispute but has relaxed controls on the Iraqi border during hostilities. She would no doubt welcome a permanent settlement in Iraq if it meant greater stability on her south-eastern border, but she must have fears that ~~it~~ would ~~in fact~~ encourage the aspirations of her own Kurdish population, ~~which numbering~~ some 3 million. ~~Attention was drawn to her~~ ^{attracted attention} own Kurdish problem in April 1971, when one of the reasons given by the Turkish Government for imposing martial law was the ~~threat~~ of a Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey. (The Turks indicated in confidence that the trouble among the Kurds, particularly the students, was being directed from East Germany). At a press conference on 1 May, however, the ^{Turkish} Prime Minister said that the threat from the Kurds was potential rather than actual and that the imposition of martial law allowed the security forces full control of the situation.

Iran

32. It is believed that the Kurds received financial aid from the Iranian Government in Qasim's time and that some Kurds were given training in heavy weapons units of the Iranian army.

34. Iran's distrust of the Ba'ath Government
/and of

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i.e. allowing
Kurds to pass
yes

Autonomy for
the Kurds in Iraq

Can it be
that they
were
No intention
CR

SECRET

and of its dealings with Nasser led her to increase her aid to the Kurds substantially in 1963, though the Shah resisted the temptation to declare open support for their cause. Since 1963 Iran has been the Kurds' most important ally, supplying them with arms and other equipment, provisions, cash, training, and rear communications. Iranian aid is one of the "open secrets" of the Middle East and has frequently been referred to by the Shah in private as his "Kurdish card" in terms of his relations with the Iraq Government. It is evident that, although he risked stimulating the ambitions of Iran's own Kurdish population and provoking Iraq to retaliatory measures in the Shatt-al-Arab and Khuzistan by supporting Barzani, he felt that he could not let slip such an opportunity to embarrass and weaken the Iraq regime. He also saw his action as pre-empting Soviet involvement with the Kurds; Soviet support for them had been limited almost entirely to verbal support in Qasim's time, but in view of the extreme antipathy of the Soviet Union to the Ba'ath regime of 1963 there were widespread fears that it might take on a more substantial form and threaten the security of other countries in the area as well as Iraq.

34. The Iraq Government have on several occasions complained to Iran about her

/support

SECRET

do we know this
Yes. He was thinking
of it.
ch

can this be
released, e.g. to
the Americans etc.
or does it need
to be kept intimate?
It's alright for American
corruption, but
probably not for any
other country. ch

? does this refer
to the fact that
they have been
very interested
in aid.
This refers to the
regime of 1963, not
the present one. ch

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

support for the Kurds, notably in January 1966 when the Iraqi garrison at Panjwin was cut off by the Kurds and subjected to artillery bombardment. Iraq then accused Iran both of supplying the Kurds with arms and of allowing her territory to be used for mounting the bombardment. The Iranian Government rejected the charges.

36. In addition to supplying aid of their own, the Iranians have allowed Israel to send aid to the Iraqi Kurds via their territory. Most other aid, including Red Cross aid,⁽¹⁾ has also been delivered through Iran and most journalists visiting Iraqi Kurdistan over the past eight years have entered across the Iranian border with the connivance of the Iranian authorities.

37. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq and, if it lasts, will increase Iraq's ability to cause trouble in Iranian Kurdistan. Iran can therefore be expected to work against the settlement, which came as something of a blow to her interests. But the fact that she was unable to prevent it in the first place despite considerable (financial) pressure on Barzani shows that she has only a limited influence and cannot force the Iraqi Kurds to take up arms again. However, Barzani is still in touch with the Iranians and if he decided that further hostilities were inevitable he would look to Iran, as before, for money, arms and supplies. So long as Irano-Iraqi relations remain strained, it is likely that Iran would meet Barzani's requests.

/38.

(1) This has been considerable. According to Vanli (op. cit.) eight national Red Cross organisations, of which he mentions by name only those of Sweden and Hungary, have sent relief supplies under the auspices of the International Red Cross.

38. At the moment the Kurds in Iran, who number about 1½ million, are comparatively quiescent, and the Iranian Government by a mixture of the carrot (land reform, TV station, radio programmes, etc) and the stick (stern suppression of disturbances, exile of troublemakers, etc) has fairly firm control over them. But there is still a legacy of discontent, stemming from the unsuccessful attempt to set up an independent Kurdish Republic in Iran in 1946, which could be exploited against the Iranian Government, particularly if the Iraqi Kurds were to achieve full autonomy or were to come to a permanent settlement with the Iraq Government. Therefore, while it is in Iran's interests that the Iraqi Kurds should be encouraged to fight the Iraq Government for what they want, it may not be in Iran's interests that they should be successful. The Iranian aim is to keep trouble firmly on the Iraqi side of the border.

Israel

39. Israel has supplied arms covertly to the Kurds at least since 1964, sending them by way of Iran with the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. She has also provided military advisers, training for Kurdish officers, and some cash. Her aim has been to weaken the Iraq Government generally and, specifically, to tie down in northern Iraq troops which would otherwise be available for hostilities against her. She is thought to have supplied rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Her aid is a better kept secret than that of Iran but is known to

/the

the Iraqi authorities and has sometimes been the subject of speculation in the press, in the Arab world and elsewhere.

VI ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

40. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and has criticised successive governments there for their treatment of the Kurds. The degree of her criticism has, however, tended to vary according to her opinion of the government of the day. Thus, when the ¹⁹⁶³ Ba'ath Government, which was strongly anti-Communist, renewed hostilities against the Kurds, ~~in 1963~~ the Soviet Union whipped up a sharp propaganda campaign against it and threatened to raise the Kurdish question at the UN Security Council. At the same time Mongolia, probably at Soviet bidding, requested that an item accusing the Iraq Government of genocide be inscribed in the provisional agenda of the UN General Assembly. (Neither initiative came to anything because of lack of support from Afro-Asian members and a certain reluctance on the part of the Soviet Union to alienate Arab opinion as a whole.)⁽¹⁾ In 1965, in contrast, when the Soviet Union was on more friendly terms with the Baghdad Government, Soviet

/propaganda

(1) The Kurds themselves sent a number of delegations to lobby at the United Nations between 1962 and 1968, without success.

of Czech arms being delivered to Barzani via
through Eastern Turkey and the Soviet Red Cr
known to have sent him some provisions, clot
medicines.

42. The continuance of the Kurdish dispute
subject of reproof in the Soviet Union's dea
with the Iraqi Ba'ath prior to 1970 and she
undoubtedly active behind the scenes in enco
the March settlement. The extent of her inv
is not certain, but in Pravda of 28 April 19
Secretary-General of the KDP was quoted as h

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praised the Soviet Union for her "noble efforts" in "putting an end to the fratricidal war ... and re-establishing calm and peace in Iraq ..."

The Soviet public will have understood from this that their Government were openly taking credit for bringing about the settlement.

43. It is likely that the Soviet Union watched the deterioration in Arab/Kurdish relations during 1971 with misgivings. It was widely believed that the high-level Soviet mission which visited Iraq in June 1971 under the leadership of Novikov emphasised to the Ba'ath Government their concern that the 1970 agreement should stick.

VII ATTITUDE OF HMG

44. During the period under review HMG's policy concerning the Kurdish question continued to be one of non-involvement. The public position

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was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in Parliament in June 1965, when he said: "HMG regret the fighting in Kurdistan, as any other instability in the Middle East, but we regard the Kurdish question as an internal Iraqi matter in which it would be inappropriate for us to interfere". In private, HMG have on appropriate occasions urged both sides to reach a peaceful settlement.

4. The Kurdish dispute is of special concern to Britain in that the installations of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), in which Shell and BP both have a 23.75% interest, are extremely vulnerable to Kurdish attack. In Qasim's time the Kurds shrank from sabotage, except of a very minor nature, but abducted two IPC employees in 1962 in a successful attempt to gain publicity. During hostilities in 1963, 1965 and 1966 there were a few minor incidents of sabotage, some of which may have been intended as a threat of more serious action. Fears of major sabotage, however, proved groundless, seemingly because the Kurds did not wish to alienate Iraqi or Western opinion, ~~or destroy what they hoped~~ ^{fully damage} would one day be the major source of their own income. The most serious incident in the history of the dispute took place in 1969, when damage to installations in Kirkuk caused by mortar fire affected operations

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the would take some
doing, in a permanent
basis.

in general and the
IPC in particular,
given that they hoped
that the oil

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for more than a week. All in all, it may be said that the Kurds represent the least of the threats to the supply of oil from Iraq.

46. Another way in which the Kurdish revolt has touched on HMG's interests is that the deployment of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan ~~has~~ reduced Iraq's capability to attack Kuwait or operate elsewhere in the Gulf. This consideration, however, ^{never} ~~has not~~ provided adequate grounds for contemplating active support for the Kurds, which would have jeopardised HMG's considerable political and commercial interests in Iraq and caused anxiety in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. (Since the March 1970 agreement some redeployment of the Iraqi Army has in fact taken place, giving rise to anxiety in Kuwait in particular.)

47. While HMG have ^{in their attitude to the dispute} given over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, the humanitarian consideration that arms might be used against Kurdish civilians has at times been an inhibiting factor in their policy on arms supplies to Iraq. Thus in 1963 they decided to phase the delivery of rockets, mortar bombs and other ammunition ordered by the Iraq armed forces; ~~and~~ a similar decision was taken with regard to the supply of ammunition and rockets in 1964. But HMG have never actually refused to supply ~~any~~ ^{for this reason} arms ~~because of Kurdish considerations~~ other factors, particularly the possibility of weaning Iraq away from

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dependence on Soviet military supplies, have been considered more important.

48. Even during hostilities, HMG's policy of non-involvement ^{did} ~~has~~ ^{stand} ~~stood~~ in the way of cautious contact with the Kurds, with whom it ^{was} ~~has been~~ felt desirable to keep on as good terms as possible within the limitations of the situation. Thus, during the 1960's Kurdish emissaries were from time to time received by members of the FCO in London outside the office on an unofficial basis. In Baghdad, paradoxically, dealings tended to be less circumspect because many Kurds in touch with rebel groups were allowed to circulate freely and even participated in the Government. At other posts Kurdish emissaries were received if they requested interviews; letters for the Prime Minister or other Ministers were accepted and forwarded to the FCO, but it was customary not to give a written acknowledgement or send a reply.

49. The activities of Kurdish emissaries in London on occasion evoked protest from the Iraqi Ambassador - notably in 1965, when Jalal al Talabani appeared on BBC television. The question of granting visas to them was reviewed on a number of occasions: the policy was to issue visas, but sometimes to accompany their issue with a request (unenforceable) that the applicant should not take part in political or propaganda activities which might be embarrassing to HMG.

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50. Despite HMG's policy of non-involvement, the Iraq Government have tended to suspect Britain of supplying the Kurds with aid in cooperation with Iran. (The fact that both are members of CENTO has lent colour to this myth.) In August 1965 the Iraqis claimed to have concrete evidence of this in the shape of arms and ammunition captured from the Kurds, but details which they later furnished to support the allegations were insufficient to permit identification of the items. HMG gave Iraq an assurance that they had not supplied arms to the Kurds.

51. HMG were reluctant to agree to numerous requests from Iraq between 1963 and 1966 that they should bring their influence to bear on the Shah to stop his aid to the Kurds, it being felt that there was a likelihood of causing irritation without affecting Iranian policy. On one occasion in 1965, however, HMG did undertake to transmit representations on behalf of the Iraqis, without entering into the merits of the complaint; and in January 1966, when a series of border incidents connected with the Kurdish war had created extreme tension between Iran and Iraq, HMG counselled moderation on both Governments at each other's request, but in a low key. Circumstances have not required the question of making representations to be considered since then.

52. The last occasion on which the Kurdish question was raised in Parliament was in December 1969, when Mr Rose asked whether HMG would seek to raise at the

/UN

UN Human Rights Commission the dangers to peace in the Middle East arising from "the bombing and atrocities carried out by the Iraqi Government". The Minister of State for the FCO replied: "No. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for HMG to take the initiative in this matter at the UN. Our attitude towards action at the UN, were this subject to be raised in the Human Rights Commission, would depend on the case that is presented". This reply was in accordance with HMG's policy of non-involvement in the Kurdish dispute. It was also consistent with HMG's position that, where a consistent pattern of violations of human rights in the sense of a general policy is alleged to exist, the UN can legitimately consider the situation even though the allegation concerns an internal matter of a Member State. (Anything falling short of a consistent pattern, or a general policy, is probably covered by the domestic jurisdiction of the UN Charter (Article 2(7)), except where an individual instance of violation is part of a general policy.) In 1963, when Mongolia requested that a charge of genocide be brought against the Iraq Government, but later dropped the request, HMG, as in 1969, did not commit themselves on the question, although it was felt within the Foreign Office at that time that Iraqi methods, including the bombing of Kurdish villages, had exceeded purely military requirements and might sustain a charge of a deliberate attempt to destroy the Kurds as a race.

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53. HMG's policy of non-involvement meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid while fighting was in progress. ~~Up to the time when Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with HMG at the end of November 1971~~ ^{in December} A small technical assistance programme for Iraq ^{has been} ~~was~~ in operation ^{since} ~~which was started in~~ 1970. Kurds, like all Iraqi citizens, ^{have been} ~~were~~ eligible for awards under it if they ^{are} ~~were~~ nominated by the Iraq Government. HMG ^{have} ~~also~~ presented books and equipment to Suleimaniya University. HM Embassy in Baghdad were also in touch with War on Want to see if that body could provide medical supplies through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

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CONCLUSIONS

54. ~~Conclusions.~~ Some progress has been made in implementing the 1970 settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Kurdish forces (Pish Merga) and the KDP, have yet to be resolved in detail. It is far from certain how long the settlement will survive and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of its implementation is growing. If this continues, there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

55. It is to the advantage of both the Iraq Government and the Kurds themselves that the settlement should endure. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house ^{when} ~~as long as~~ the Kurds are in rebellion. For Britain, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

56. The reverse side of the coin is that with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country Iraq may be encouraged to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf (particularly in the period after British military withdrawal), or on the "Eastern front" with Israel. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it, paradoxically, a potential threat to stability in other areas of the Middle East. It is
/least

least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraqi régime, and Kuwait, who remains suspicious of Iraqi territorial ambitions despite Iraq's formal acceptance in 1963 of Kuwait's independence within the 1932 frontier.

57. If a permanent settlement is achieved by the Kurds in Iraq this could awaken the aspirations of the Kurdish populations of Iran and Turkey. In Iran the Kurds are comparatively quiescent at present, but in Turkey the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in April 1971.

58. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as that of Iraq herself. But the Soviet Union chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world ^{and} has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She ~~has~~ undoubtedly played a part in promoting, and probably also in maintaining, the 1970 settlement.

59. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by

/Mulla

Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically-minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

~~Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March 1970.~~

~~Note: The full paper has been circulated to consumers most likely to have an interest in the details. Copies are available on request.~~

*Middle East Section,
Research Department,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

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ANNEX

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DECLARATION
 ISSUED BY THE ^{RAQ} /REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND
 COUNCIL, 11 MARCH, 1970.

(The declaration begins with a long partisan review of the history of the Kurdish question and lists those measures taken by the Ba'athist régime in the last 18 months which, it claims, laid the foundation for the present agreement with the Kurds. What follows is a verbatim translation of the rest of the declaration.)

The Revolutionary Command Council initiated contacts with Mustafa al Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which led to an exchange of views. Both sides became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this declaration.

The Revolutionary Command Council re-affirms its determination to deepen and expand all effective measures to achieve cultural and economic development in the Kurdish area, seeking first of all to enable the Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and to ensure that they participate in a practical way in the earnest endeavours to build a homeland and the struggle to fulfil its great national aims. The Revolutionary Command Council has therefore reached the following decisions:

1. The Kurdish language shall be with Arabic the official language in areas populated by the Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic shall be taught in all schools where Kurdish is the language of instruction while Kurdish shall be taught in schools throughout the remainder of Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.
2. The participation of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between Kurds and others in filling public offices including sensitive and important posts in the State, such as Cabinet Portfolios, Army Command, etc. These have been and will remain among the important objectives which the revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. In recognising this the revolutionary Government stresses the necessity of achieving an equitable ratio in such appointments with due

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regard to efficiency, the proportionate distribution of the Kurdish population and the inequities which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past.

3. In view of the cultural and educational backwardness of the Kurdish population, a plan will be drawn up to make good this backwardness by:

(a) Hastening implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people and delegating to the Directorate-General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and directing radio and television programmes on Kurdish national issues.

(b) Reinstating, regardless of age, all students expelled or compelled to leave school because of the conflict in the area; failing reinstatement, to find appropriate solutions in individual cases.

(c) Building more schools in the Kurdish area. Raising the standard of education and admitting students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and scholarships in numbers proportionate to the Kurdish population.

4. In the administrative units in predominantly Kurdish areas officials shall be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language provided that the required number is available. Principal officials (Governor, Qaimaqam, Director of Police, Director of Security, etc), will be appointed and immediate action will be taken to set up Government machinery in the area in consultation with the High Committee established to supervise the implementation of this statement; this to be carried out in a manner which will strengthen national unity and the stability of the area.

5. The Government recognises the right of the Kurdish people to set up their own organisations for students, young people, women and teachers which will be affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

6. (a) The operative period of paragraphs 1 and 2 of RCC decision No 39 of 5 August, 1968 (this granted amnesty to all those involved in the Kurdish fighting up to that date) shall be extended up to the date of issue of this statement and shall

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extend to all those who participated in the conflict in the Kurdish area.

(b) Workers, officials and employees, both civilian and military, shall return to service irrespective of establishment. Civilians may be employed in the Kurdish area according to requirements.

7. (a) A committee of experts shall be set up to supervise the general development of the Kurdish area and to arrange compensation for the setbacks of recent years. An adequate budget is to be allocated for this purpose. The committee in question shall come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Northern Affairs.

(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up to ensure balanced development throughout Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

(c) Pensions shall be paid to the families of the Kurdish armed movement and others martyred during the past regrettable hostilities; pensions will also be paid to those disabled or deformed as a result of the fighting. Special legislation will be enacted to implement this on the lines of the laws currently in force.

(d) Immediate action will be taken to relieve hardship by implementing housing projects, providing appropriate aid in cash and in kind and by arranging through the High Committee for the appropriate compensation to those in need who are not covered by the provisions of the paragraphs above.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former homes. The inhabitants of villages in areas not designated for habitation and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and properly compensated.

9. The Agrarian Reform Law shall be quickly implemented in the Kurdish area and amended in such a way as to guarantee the end of the feudal system and the acquisition by the peasants of suitable plots of land. Taxes on such land which accumulated over the period of the conflict shall be waived.

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10. It has been agreed that the Interim Constitution shall be amended as follows:

(a) The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

(b) The following paragraphs shall be added to Article 4 of the Constitution:

"The Kurdish language shall be, with Arabic, the official language in the Kurdish area."

(c) The above will be incorporated into the permanent Constitution.

11. The (Kurdish) broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be handed over to the Government. This is to be done when the final stages of the agreement are implemented.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

13. The Governates Law shall be amended to conform with the substance of this statement.

14. Following the publication of this statement the necessary measures shall be taken in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units in areas populated by a Kurdish majority; these areas to be decided by an official census yet to be carried out. The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the Kurdish's people's exercise of all their national rights as a guarantee of their enjoying autonomy (al-hukm-adh-dhati) within the wider national unity. Until this administrative unity is achieved Kurdish national affairs shall be co-ordinated by periodic meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As autonomy is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic the exploitation of natural resources in the area will naturally fall under the jurisdiction of the Republican authorities.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a ratio corresponding with their proportion of the Iraqi population.

(The declaration concludes with general exhortations).

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Reference.....

Mr. Orchard
Mr. Armitage

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

1. The attached drafts are now ready for printing.
(I have attached two distribution sheets to the back of each.)
2. Both versions will have to be SECRET - UK EYES ONLY. (I appreciate that it may often be desirable to make the "Summary only" version of a paper CONFIDENTIAL only, but in this instance much of the paper's usefulness would be lost if we deleted references to arms supplies, etc.)
3. In view of Near Eastern Department's request that the paper should be printed quickly and distributed by Christmas, I recommend that we ask the printers to give it priority.

C.J.S. Rundle

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3 December 1971

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Would you please ask Office Services to
give top priority to the full version as
it has been asked for urgently.*

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F. RANDALL
6/12/71

(RR 6/10)

(7 December, 1971)

Departmental Series No.17 (abridged
version)

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

(Abstract and Summary)

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census). There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued.
2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965.
3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded.
4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, including the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, remain unresolved.
5. Apart from tribal rivalries, a division exists within the Kurdish ranks between the tribal elements led by Barzani and the Left-wing urban elements represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. Talabani and Ahmad were expelled from the Kurdish Democratic Party in 1964 and since then Barzani's authority has been supreme; but if a firm peace were established the radical elements would be likely to make their influence felt again.
6. Organisation of the Kurdish army: it has employed guerrilla tactics with success.
7. Attitudes of other countries in the region. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who, with a Kurdish population of some 3 million,

have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance, originally in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds and more generally in order to weaken the Iraq Government. Israel has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret.

8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid.

9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; the reverse side of the coin, however, is that a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the Iraqi régime to redispense troops tied up in the north and would perhaps encourage them to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf area. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the actual delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces in order to hinder their use against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have, mistakenly, suspected HMG of cooperating with Iran in supplying the Kurds with arms. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place.

CONCLUSIONS

10. Some progress has been made in implementing the 1970 settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Kurdish forces (Pish Merga) and the Kurdish Democratic Party, have yet to be resolved in detail. It is far from certain how long the settlement will survive and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of its implementation is growing. If this continues, there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

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Middle East Section,
Research Department,
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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971****SUMMARY**

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census). There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued. (Paragraphs 1-5)
2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965. (Paragraphs 6-10)
3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded. (Paragraphs 11-13)
4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, including the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, remain unresolved. (Paragraphs 14-23)
5. Apart from tribal rivalries, a division exists within the Kurdish ranks between the tribal elements led by Barzani and the Left-wing urban elements represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. Talabani and Ahmad were expelled from the Kurdish Democratic Party in 1964 and since then Barzani's authority has been supreme; but if a firm peace were established the radical elements would be likely to make their influence felt again. (Paragraphs 24-27)
6. Organisation of the Kurdish army. It has employed guerrilla tactics with success. (Paragraphs 28-30)
7. Attitudes of other countries in the region. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who, with a Kurdish population of some 3 million, have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has

covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance, originally in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds and more generally in order to weaken the Iraq Government. Israel has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret. (Paragraphs 31-39)

8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid. (Paragraphs 40-43)

9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; the reverse side of the coin, however, is that a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the Iraqi régime to redispense troops tied up in the north and would perhaps encourage them to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf area. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces in order to hinder their use against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have, mistakenly, suspected HMG of cooperating with Iran in supplying the Kurds with arms. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place. (Paragraphs 44-53)

10. Conclusions. It is far from certain how long the 1970 settlement will survive. (Paragraphs 54-59)

Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March 1970.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Department Memorandum LR 6/9G of 1963 surveyed the Kurdish problem in Iraq between 1958 and 1963. The present memorandum examines developments since 1963.

2. There are probably between 6 and 7 million Kurds in the Middle East. Their racial origins are obscure; they combine the physical characteristics of various races. Their language, however, is of Indo-European origin and bears a close relation to Persian. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, although a few tribes are Shi'i. A hardy and dour mountain race with a reputation for brigandage, they have never been united politically as one people but have mostly lived a tribal life with its attendant disputes and differing dialects and customs. "Kurdistan" - the area inhabited by them as a more or less homogeneous community constituting the majority of the population - is at present divided between Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with small overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union.*

3. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census) - a larger percentage than in any other country. Thanks partly to the mountainous nature of their terrain, they have managed to maintain a large degree of independence from the central Government. In the tribal areas their basic desire is to maintain this independence and to be free to continue their traditional way of life - farming and herding - without interference. For the urban elements, however, which now make up about a quarter of the Kurdish population in Iraq, the question of equality of opportunity within the Iraqi State has become increasingly important in recent years. The demands of the Iraqi Kurds therefore include at one and the same time autonomy for the Kurdish region and full rights for themselves as Iraqi citizens. The establishment of an independent Kurdistan uniting all the Kurds at present divided by international frontiers is not an immediate aim,** though it has long been the dream of almost every Kurd.

4. During the period of British administration (1920-1932) steps were taken to improve conditions among the Kurds in Iraq, but efforts to establish

* The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) envisaged the setting up of an autonomous Kurdistan, but was never ratified because of Turkish opposition. Instead, the Kurds found themselves divided by the international frontiers of Turkey, Iraq and Syria where under the Ottoman Empire only provincial boundaries had existed.

** The 1966 Programme of the Kurdish Democratic Party stated that the Kurds were fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic".

a special administration for Kurdish districts were hampered by a series of tribal revolts. When Iraq became fully independent in 1932 she made a formal declaration to the League of Nations guaranteeing the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. This guaranteed them equality before the law with other Iraqi nationals and stipulated, inter alia, areas in which Kurdish was to be an official language side by side with Arabic and in which officials should if possible be Kurds. It also promised the allocation of official funds for the provision of primary education in the Kurdish language. The Government, however, did little to honour this declaration and concerned itself primarily with enforcing its authority in Kurdistan. Kurdish discontent led to a number of uprisings, the most serious of which was led by the tribal leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani in 1943-1945. He was defeated by the Iraqi army, aided by tribes in Government pay, and fled to Iran, where he joined the short-lived Kurdish "Republic of Mahabad". After its collapse he made his way with a number of his followers to the Soviet Union.

5. When Qasim deposed the monarchy in 1958 he gave the Kurds promises of equality with the Arab population of Iraq and allowed Barzani to return from exile. After an initial period of cooperation, however, Kurdish opinion hardened against the Government because of its neglect of their interests and its arming of tribes hostile to the Barzanis. In July 1961 the Barzanis took to arms and defeated these enemies. Supported by other tribes and by members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, they then proceeded to take over Government posts in the north. By the end of August the semi-circle of mountains from north-west of Mosul to south-east of Kirkuk was effectively under Kurdish control. Barzani then presented Qasim with a number of demands, including autonomy for the Kurds, to which Qasim replied by launching a full-scale military offensive against the Kurds in September. Hostilities continued intermittently until Qasim's fall in February 1963, neither side gaining a decisive advantage. The Government forces held the main towns in the North - Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimaniya - but the Kurds controlled most of the rest of their territory.

II. THE KURDISH WAR, 1963-1969

The 1963 Ba'athist campaign

6. Almost immediately after the Ba'ath Party came to power in February 1963 a cease-fire was arranged. Negotiations began in the following month, when it was announced that the Government were prepared to grant the Kurds "national rights on the basis of decentralisation". Kurdish demands for a share in oil revenues and other State revenues on a per capita basis and the exclusion of Arab troops from Kurdistan proved unacceptable to the Government and, although they made counter-proposals, it soon became apparent that the negotiations were getting nowhere. In June the Government threw a Kurdish delegation into prison and launched a new military offensive. This was managed with more drive than had been

displayed under Qasim, and was more ruthless and bloody. But by the time winter closed in the army had secured control of only a small fraction of the mountainous area of Kurdistan and it was evident that the Government had little hope of imposing a military solution.

1964 negotiations and Barzani's dispute with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani

7. In February 1964 a cease-fire was announced between the Kurds and the Government which, since the ousting of the Ba'ath in November 1963, had been Nasserist in complexion. An official statement by President Arif promised the Kurds national rights "in a single fraternal national unity", proclaimed a general amnesty, and pledged the Government to undertake the rehabilitation of the north and reinstate Kurdish officials and employees there. There followed innumerable visits to the north by Government representatives in an attempt to get the Kurds to accept something less than autonomy.

8. The Kurds meanwhile split into two main factions. The first, led by Barzani, who was both the dominant tribal leader and Chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), took the view that every effort must be made to test the Government's sincerity and see whether an agreement could be reached. The second, a group of younger and more radically inclined KDP members led by Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani, early came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained from dealings with the Government. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the KDP at Qala Diza in July 1964, reportedly attended by some 900 delegates, at which 14 senior party members, including Ahmad and Talabani and all but one of the party's Politbureau, were formally expelled and a new Politbureau was elected. An armed clash then took place between the rival groups, as a result of which Ahmad and Talabani fled to Iran with some 400 of their supporters. (They were given sanctuary at Hamadan by the Iranian authorities.)

The 1965 campaign

9. After more than a year of truce, marked by increasingly desultory negotiations, hostilities were resumed by the Government in the first week of April, 1965. By then most of the dissident Kurdish group had made their peace with Barzani and returned from Iran, though Ibrahim Ahmad remained there unreconciled and Talabani spent the summer abroad trying to rally international support for the Kurdish cause.

10. The 1965 campaign went no better for the Government than previous ones and by the end of the year it was once again evident that deadlock had been reached on the military front.*

The Bazzaz Proposals, 1966

11. Early in 1966 there were indications that Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, who in the previous autumn had been appointed Iraq's first civilian Premier since the 1958 revolution, was in favour of negotiating peace with the Kurds rather than mounting a new spring offensive. His advice was over-ruled and a new offensive began in May, but the Government forces almost immediately suffered a severe setback near Rowanduz and early in June the campaign was called off.

12. On 29 June 1966 Dr Bazzaz announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. His twelve points were, in summary:

- (i) Equal national rights for Kurds and Arabs in Iraq.
- (ii) Decentralisation: elected local assemblies to have wide powers.
- (iii) Kurdish to be recognised as an official language, side by side with Arabic, in areas where the Kurds formed a majority.
- (iv) Kurdish representation in the National Assembly on a proportional basis.
- (v) Public offices and appointments to be open to Kurds.
- (vi) Equality of educational opportunity.
- (vii) Local officials to be Kurds if sufficient available.
- (viii) A measure of political freedom and freedom of expression for the Kurds.
- (ix) A general amnesty and reinstatement of Kurdish officials and employees.
- (x) Kurdish members of the armed forces and police to report to their units. Others under arms to surrender their weapons.
- (xi) Rehabilitation of the North.
- (xii) Resettlement of displaced individuals and groups.

* Two notable features of this campaign were Kurdish accusations that poison gas was used and the presence of UAR troops in a camp near Baghdad (under the auspices of the Iraq-UAR Joint Military Command), which helped to release Iraqi troops from internal security duties to take part in the war.

13. Although the plan was vague in parts and left a great deal unsaid* it seemed to provide an adequate basis for a settlement and it was felt that as long as Bazzaz remained in office there was a fair chance of progress. The plan was officially welcomed by Barzani. By mid-July, however the Kurds were becoming disillusioned by lack of any positive signs of implementation, and when Bazzaz was dismissed in August hopes of a settlement faded.

Continued stalemate in 1967

14. Although full-scale hostilities were not resumed in 1966 or 1967, Government forces remained deployed in the north and were involved in some skirmishes with Kurdish forces. The Government endeavoured to weaken Barzani's position by giving support to Talabani, who had again broken with him; sporadic armed clashes took place between the rival Kurdish groups, but Talabani's faction was too weak to present a serious challenge to Barzani's authority.

The return of the Ba'ath, 1968

15. The Ba'athist Government which came to power in July 1968 did not at first show any sign of having better ideas on how to deal with the Kurds than those which the previous Ba'athist Government had had in 1963 or those which other administrations had applied in the interim. They thus continued the policy which they had inherited from the previous Government of containing the extent of the area controlled by the Kurds and supporting Talabani's faction with money and arms.

16. After a time, however, they began to give effect to certain of the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966. Thus Kurdish was made the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish areas; a university was established in Suleimaniya; a Kurdish Academy of Letters was set up; an amnesty was declared for those who had taken part in the fighting; and a measure of decentralisation of power to the governorates was introduced. In spite of these propitiatory gestures, skirmishing continued throughout 1969.

* According to Ismet Sharif Vanly (Le Kurdistan Irakien, Entité National, Neuchatel 1970) there were also three secret clauses in which the Government undertook

- (a) to create a new Liwa of Dohuk, comprising the Kurdish area then within the Liwa of Mosul,
- (b) to free all political prisoners in Iraq, and
- (c) to legalise the Kurdish Democratic Party.

III. THE MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT

17. By January 1970 it became evident that serious negotiations were taking place between the Ba'ath and representatives of Barzani under cover of a de facto cease-fire. The successful outcome of these negotiations was announced by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council on 11 March. The terms of the announcement* followed fairly closely the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966 and contained the following main points:

- (i) The Kurds were to enjoy political rights and autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic. The areas of Kurdish autonomy were to be determined by an official census.
- (ii) The existence of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd, was to be recognised in the Constitution.
- (iii) A Kurd was to be appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.
- (iv) The Kurds were to share in the legislative power on a proportional basis.
- (v) The Kurds were to participate in the Government and in Government departments without discrimination.
- (vi) Officials in Kurdish areas were to be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language.
- (vii) Kurdish and Arabic were both to be official languages in the Kurdish areas; Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in these areas.
- (viii) All former Kurdish military and civil officials, students and workers were to be reinstated.
- (ix) Educational and cultural facilities for Kurds were to be expanded.
- (x) The Kurds were to have their own organisations for students, youth, women and teachers, affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

* For a more detailed text of the announcement see the Annex to this memorandum.

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY

- (xi) Inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages were to be restored to their former homes.
- (xii) Relief measures for Kurds affected by the hostilities were to be put in hand.
- (xiii) A Kurdish development commission with an adequate budget was to be established and a special economic plan for the Kurdish region was to be prepared.
- (xiv) Agrarian reform was to be speeded up in Kurdish areas.
- (xv) The exploitation of natural resources in the autonomous area was to be the responsibility of the Republican authorities.
- (xvi) The Kurdish broadcasting station and all heavy weapons were to be surrendered during the final stages of the implementation of the agreement.

18. The published agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol, reportedly containing the following provisions:

- (i) A joint committee was to be set up to supervise implementation of the agreement.
- (ii) One of the tasks of this committee would be to resettle the Pish Merga (Kurdish rebel forces), except for about 6,000 men who would remain in the force. During the period of resettlement, which would be in five unspecified stages, the Government would pay for the general upkeep of the force.
- (iii) The Government would disarm and disband all Kurdish forces opposed to Barzani, and the Iraqi armed forces would withdraw to their "normal positions".
- (iv) The KDP was to be allowed to operate freely in the Kurdish region and to publish its own newspaper.
- (v) All persons formerly in Government service who took part in the Kurdish rebellion would be permitted to resume employment without loss of seniority. Those who had served with the Kurdish armed forces would be permitted to count that service as if they had served in the Iraqi armed forces.
- (vi) A nation-wide census would take place within one year to define the region of Kurdish majority.
- (vii) Although the Iraqi national flag could not be altered immediately, a Kurdish symbol would be incorporated when next the flag was changed.

19. Although the secret clauses went some way towards removing obscurities in the published terms, some important points, such as the exact nature of Kurdish autonomy and the amount to be allocated by the Iraq Government for the development of the Kurdish region, remained to be clarified; it was evident that further negotiation would be needed on these and other points before the settlement could be considered comprehensive.

20. Progress in implementing the agreement during 1970 was not speedy. The amnesty was generally observed, five Kurdish Ministers were appointed, development activities began in Kurdistan, and a number of gestures were made by the Government in the cultural and education fields. On the other hand the difficulties over the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President and the creation of a National Assembly had still not been resolved in 1971 (see paragraph 22 below). The Government withdrew their support from Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad, who made their submission to Barzani and formally merged their "Kurdish Revolutionary Party" with the KDP. A number of the Pish Merga returned to their civilian occupations and a number were formed into a Kurdish frontier force, under the Ministry of the Interior, but Barzani retained some 20,000 men under arms and kept both his heavy weapons and his broadcasting station. (In March 1971 it was reported that he had handed them over, but in fact he retained the major part of his serviceable equipment.) The future of the KDP, which was among the questions not satisfactorily spelt out in the agreement, remained unresolved; declarations of its identity of outlook with the Ba'ath were issued from time to time but no practical links were forged. A clear-cut picture of future administrative arrangements within Kurdistan also failed to emerge: there can be little doubt that by "autonomy" the Government meant no more than a modest measure of regional self-administration, whereas the Kurds intended it to mean a good deal more.

21. The all-important question of the physical extent of the area of Kurdish autonomy, which was to be determined by a census, also remained unresolved: the census was announced for October 1970 but was postponed sine die shortly before the appointed date. The main difficulty in fixing the boundary concerned the status of the governorate of Kirkuk, which contains the main oil-producing region of Iraq (although the country's large reserves are in the south) and has a mixed population of Turkomans, Kurds and Arabs. (The position is complicated by the fact that many Kurdish families were driven from their homes during hostilities and Arabs were settled in their place.) While accepting in March 1970 that the exploitation of the oilfields should be under the jurisdiction of the central Government, the Kurds have long insisted that Kirkuk should be their capital and are not prepared to accept its exclusion from the autonomous region. The Government, for their part, could hardly be expected to accept a boundary which left the oilfields on the wrong side of the line. Given the impossibility of the two sides agreeing on this point it was perhaps as well in the short term that the census was postponed, since the passions which would have been aroused by it on both sides might have jeopardised the implementation of other parts of the agreement. In the long term, however, no settlement is likely to be permanent unless the territorial question is solved.

22. The postponement of the census did not immediately provoke a reaction from the Kurds. Their first priority was evidently to see that the Government went ahead with reconstruction and development in the north and it was felt that as long as progress continued to be made in this and other fields they would continue to observe the truce, though their patience might not be inexhaustible. The Government, for their part, needing the stability that the cessation of hostilities could bring, favoured a policy of reconciliation. (It is noteworthy in this connexion that the political reputation of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the strong man of the Iraqi Ba'ath, is to some extent linked to the March 1970 agreement, which he brought about in the face of considerable opposition from within the party.) In 1971 the Government at various times announced plans for economic development in the north, especially in the tourist field. Their relaxation of restrictions on members of the diplomatic corps travelling in the north suggested that they considered reconciliation to be proceeding smoothly enough. Nevertheless, the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President has still not taken place. (It is believed that Barzani is unwilling to see the post filled until its functions are defined: if it is to be a sinecure, he sees no point in offering a hostage to the Ba'ath.) Nor has the National Assembly been created, despite forecasts in the President's speech at the 1971 celebrations of the July Revolution. (The Ba'ath have still been unable to formulate terms under which the non-Ba'athi elements - the Kurds and the Communists - would be prepared to participate in national political life, and which would not jeopardise the Ba'ath Party's supreme rôle to an unacceptable degree.) There were indeed some specific indications of a deterioration in Kurdish-Government relations during 1971, such as a dispute over the status of the Feili Kurds - a tribe mainly of Iranian origin (and citizenship), many of whom work as labourers and porters in Baghdad and who were claiming Iraqi citizenship - and reports of skirmishes in the north in which pro-Talabani tribes appear to have been involved. Presumably in response to Kurdish complaints, the Government set up a new Higher Committee for Kurdish Affairs in May, with the ostensible purpose of implementing the 1970 agreement more actively; but since none of its members was a Kurd it can hardly have inspired much confidence in the Kurdish side; indeed, the Committee's attempt to co-opt the Chief Editor of Al Ta'akhi was rebuffed. There were also reports that Barzani had put further demands to the Iraq Government during the summer, including requests that ID 150 million per annum should be devoted to Kurdish areas and that a National Assembly should be set up with one-third Kurdish membership. Finally the attempt to assassinate Barzani in September 1971, which was widely held to have been the work of the central Government, but for which the Ba'ath leadership officially denied responsibility, must have increased the suspicion with which Barzani has always regarded the Baghdad Government and set back further the process of reconciliation. Barzani's feelings were shown in an interview with the Beirut French newspaper, L'Orient le Jour, on 18 November, in which he said that he did not trust the Baghdad authorities and feared a surprise attack by the Iraqi army.

23. In short, the situation seems almost to have reached an impasse again and it appears unlikely that a solution to the outstanding problems will be found. If Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of implementation of the agreement continues to grow, there may soon be further outbreaks of fighting serious enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter.

IV POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH REVOLT

Political

24. Since 1961, when Barzani established himself as the dominant tribal leader and the KDP joined forces with him, the Iraqi Kurds have presented a more united front than during previous revolts. The feud which has continued on and off since 1964 between Barzani on the one hand and Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad on the other, however, is a symptom of the difference of outlook which separates the tribal population of the mountainous north from the urban population of the south of Kurdistan and the intellectuals in Baghdad and elsewhere. As long as the settlement remains incomplete and Barzani remains in reasonable health - he is now nearly 70 years of age - his position as the overall leader of the Iraqi Kurds is unlikely to be challenged,* but if a lasting peace is made serious divisions within the Kurdish ranks are likely to reappear. The tribal leaders, who will not necessarily remain united among themselves, will wish to preserve their authority in Kurdistan, whereas the more radical elements will want to see the KDP play a dominant role in the administration of the area and pursue progressive policies, including social and agrarian reform. In the long term the intelligentsia could find that they have more in common with the Arab socialists in Baghdad than with their kinsmen; this in part explains Talabani's past dealings with the Baghdad authorities.

25. Since the KDP is the only Kurdish political organisation in Iraq, any future struggle for control of the Kurdish movement is likely to take place within it. It is essentially a nationalist party without a coherent ideology. In the early days of Qasim's rule it associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, but their influence has probably been negligible since 1960, when the party was purged; at the same time the Communist bias in its programme was watered down. The new programme adopted in 1964, which was revised in 1966, is fairly radical

* Vanli, op.cit., describes Barzani as both a protector of the traditional chiefs vis-à-vis the party radicals and a "catalyst of all the national forces". A national hero since the days of the Mahabad Republic and his exile in the Soviet Union, Barzani has unrivalled experience as leader of the Kurdish national movement and is at his best in a crisis. But his vision is limited and he can be stubborn and inflexible. His personal ideas as to future political arrangements in Kurdistan seem to be vague.

in emphasis*; but some of its language appears to be a legacy from the old programme adopted in Qasim's time.

26. Since 1964, when Barzani moved against Talabani and other Left-wing members of the Politbureau, the party has been largely subordinate to his authority, and in the last elections to the party's Central Committee, in July 1970, Right-wing members came out on top. If a firm peace were established, however, and the party were able to become more active politically, the more radical elements would probably make their influence increasingly felt within it.

27. The organisational framework of the Kurdish revolt is complex, covering as it does a large and varied geographical area and many disparate elements of population. The principal organs of Kurdish authority in the period 1966-1970 were the Revolutionary Council, the Executive Bureau and the KDP Politbureau. Vanli** describes the Revolutionary Council as a kind of elected parliament of 62 members, which exercises supreme authority and meets every four months (or more frequently if requested by the President, by a majority of its own members, or by the Executive Bureau). The Executive Bureau he describes as a Ministerial Cabinet responsible for

* Article 2 of the programme states that the party is "a democratic, revolutionary and avant-garde party which represents the interests of the workers, peasants, salaried persons, artisans and revolutionary intellectuals of Iraqi Kurdistan". Article 3 states that the party is fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic". Article 5 states that the party has recourse to "the progressive scientific doctrines which correspond to the realities of our Kurdish people". Article 6 states that the party is fighting for the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Iraq and for freedom of speech, religion, political organisation, etc. Article 13 demands the allocation of a percentage of Iraq's oil revenues to Kurdistan, proportionate to its population. Article 14 advocates agrarian reform in Kurdistan, specially adapted to the conditions there and aimed at establishing a minimum acreage for each peasant and abolishing the feudal system; it also suggests ways of modernising agriculture in Kurdistan. Article 16 contains a section on taxes, which should be "just and based on direct and progressive taxes on income and hereditary wealth and on the reduction of indirect taxes which hit the working classes". Other articles concern the development of industry and communications, the development of Kurdish culture and education, the adoption of a "non-aligned" and "anti-imperialist" foreign policy, etc.

** op.cit. Appendices VII and VIII of this book contain French translations of the texts of the Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Revolution and the Administrative Law of the Revolution, both dated 17 October 1964.

controlling all the organs of the Kurdish revolt, including the army. Considerable influence is exerted on it by the KDP Politbureau, which designates a number of its members - apparently a majority.* (This is where the formal link between the KDP and the administration as a whole is to be found). Barzani is Chairman of all three bodies, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and is thus in a position to dominate the whole machine.

Military

28. The Iraqi Kurds can mobilise some 25,000 men. Arms in their possession include rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, and some artillery pieces. They also possess radio equipment and some motor transport. A substantial proportion of their small arms have been captured or stolen from the Iraqi army. Most of the rest, and the majority of their heavier weapons, were supplied by Iran and Israel between 1963 and 1966. They may also have received some arms from Czechoslovakia, but not on the same scale.

29. In the late sixties the Pish Merga were reportedly divided into ten "brigades", recruited on a local basis and enjoying a great deal of independence. Their activities were not fully co-ordinated, though a degree of central control was exercised by Barzani as Commander-in-Chief. Their effectiveness was to some extent limited by their reluctance to operate outside their regions. (On the other hand, the small groups used by the Kurds for commando activities are extremely mobile considering the nature of the terrain.) Barzani himself, who had round him a guard of tribesmen some 200 strong, was constantly on the move during the hostilities in order to escape detection. (His family was usually with him. His third son, Idris, acted as his aide de camp.)

30. Kurdish military organisation seems to have improved considerably between 1963 and 1966 as the result partly of Israeli instruction and partly of an influx of Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi army. During hostilities the Kurds employed guerrilla tactics with fair success, not attempting to hold towns but drawing the Iraqi army on into the mountains and harassing it there. Ground lost in the summer was usually regained in the winter, when snow and rain presented the Government forces with severe difficulties. For the Kurds hostilities were essentially defensive in nature, aimed partly at keeping open their supply routes from Iran. They did not take advantage of every opportunity to discomfit the Iraqi army; nor did they make as much use as they might of the weapon of sabotage, to which the oil installations

* Other members of the Executive Bureau are representatives of the military, the tribes, other civilians, and the Christian (Assyrian) Community. The Politbureau itself is elected from among members of the KDP Central Committee, which is elected by a congress of KDP members.

in the Kirkuk area in particular are extremely vulnerable (see paragraph 45 below). Confinement of the fighting to the hills, with no attempt to control the major towns, suited Barzani since he was thereby able to maintain a claim for tribal structure in the administration.

V. ATTITUDES OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO
THE KURDISH PROBLEM

Syria

31. In 1963, when Ba'athist régimes were in power in both Baghdad and Damascus, the Syrians sent about two brigades of troops openly to Iraq to assist in the Kurdish war and published propaganda about helping Iraq to free herself of "separatists and bandits". Since 1963 the two countries have not been on good terms and Syria has pursued a policy of non-involvement in the dispute. Although Syrian Kurds are thought to have helped their Iraqi brethren financially and there has been some coming and going over the Syrian border during hostilities, the Syrian authorities have kept a fairly tight rein on Kurdish activities. Kurdish nationalism is no longer considered a live issue within Syria, the Kurds there being too few to carry much weight (about 300,000).

Turkey

32. Turkey has not involved herself openly in the dispute but has relaxed controls on the Iraqi border during hostilities. She would no doubt welcome a permanent settlement in Iraq if it meant greater stability on her south-eastern border, but she must have fears that autonomy for the Kurds in Iraq would encourage the aspirations of her own Kurdish population, numbering some 3 million. Her own Kurdish problem attracted attention in April 1971, when one of the reasons given by the Turkish Government for imposing martial law was the threat of a Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey. (The Turks indicated in confidence that the trouble among the Kurds, particularly the students, was being directed from East Germany.) At a press conference on 1 May, however, the Turkish Prime Minister said that the threat from the Kurds was potential rather than actual and that the imposition of martial law allowed the security forces full control of the situation.

Iran

33. It is believed that the Kurds received financial aid from the Iranian Government in Qasim's time and that some Kurds were given training in heavy weapons units of the Iranian army.

34. Iran's distrust of the Ba'ath Government and of its dealings with Nasser led her to increase her aid to the Kurds substantially in 1963, though the Shah resisted the temptation to declare open support for their cause. Since 1963 Iran has been the Kurds' most important ally, supplying

them with arms and other equipment, provisions, cash, training, and rear communications. Iranian aid is one of the "open secrets" of the Middle East and has frequently been referred to by the Shah in private as his "Kurdish card" in terms of his relations with the Iraq Government. It is evident that, although he risked stimulating the ambitions of Iran's own Kurdish population and provoking Iraq to retaliatory measures in the Shatt-al-Arab and Khuzistan by supporting Barzani, he felt that he could not let slip such an opportunity to embarrass and weaken the Iraq régime. He also saw his action as pre-empting Soviet involvement with the Kurds; Soviet support for them had been limited almost entirely to verbal support in Qasim's time, but in view of the extreme antipathy of the Soviet Union to the Ba'ath régime of 1963 there were widespread fears that it might take on a more substantial form and threaten the security of other countries in the area as well as Iraq.

35. The Iraq Government have on several occasions complained to Iran about her support for the Kurds, notably in January 1966 when the Iraqi garrison at Panjwin was cut off by the Kurds and subjected to artillery bombardment. Iraq then accused Iran both of supplying the Kurds with arms and of allowing her territory to be used for mounting the bombardment. The Iranian Government rejected the charges.

36. In addition to supplying aid of their own, the Iranians have allowed Israel to send aid to the Iraqi Kurds via their territory. Most other aid, including Red Cross aid,* has also been delivered through Iran and most journalists visiting Iraqi Kurdistan over the past eight years have entered across the Iranian border with the connivance of the Iranian authorities.

37. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq and, if it lasts, will increase Iraq's ability to cause trouble in Iranian Kurdistan. Iran can therefore be expected to work against the settlement, which came as something of a blow to her interests. But the fact that she was unable to prevent it in the first place despite considerable (financial) pressure on Barzani shows that she has only a limited influence and cannot force the Iraqi Kurds to take up arms again. However, Barzani is still in touch with the Iranians and if he decided that further hostilities were inevitable he would look to Iran, as before, for money, arms and supplies. So long as Irano-Iraqi relations remain strained, it is likely that Iran would meet Barzani's requests.

38. At the moment the Kurds in Iran, who number about 1½ million, are comparatively quiescent, and the Iranian Government by a mixture of the carrot (land reform, TV station, radio programmes, etc.) and the stick

* This has been considerable. According to Vanli (op.cit.) eight national Red Cross organisations, of which he mentions by name only those of Sweden and Hungary, have sent relief supplies under the auspices of the International Red Cross.

(stern suppression of disturbances, exile of troublemakers, etc.) has fairly firm control over them. But there is still a legacy of discontent, stemming from the unsuccessful attempt to set up an independent Kurdish Republic in Iran in 1946, which could be exploited against the Iranian Government, particularly if the Iraqi Kurds were to achieve full autonomy or were to come to a permanent settlement with the Iraq Government. Therefore, while it is in Iran's interests that the Iraqi Kurds should be encouraged to fight the Iraq Government for what they want, it may not be in Iran's interests that they should be successful. The Iranian aim is to keep trouble firmly on the Iraqi side of the border.

Israel

39. Israel has supplied arms covertly to the Kurds at least since 1964, sending them by way of Iran with the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. She has also provided military advisers, training for Kurdish officers, and some cash. Her aim has been to weaken the Iraq Government generally, and, specifically, to tie down in northern Iraq troops which would otherwise be available for hostilities against her. She is thought to have supplied rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Her aid is a better kept secret than that of Iran but is known to the Iraqi authorities and has sometimes been the subject of speculation in the press, in the Arab world and elsewhere.

VI. ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

40. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and has criticised successive governments there for their treatment of the Kurds. The degree of her criticism has, however, tended to vary according to her opinion of the government of the day. Thus, when the 1963 Ba'ath Government, which was strongly anti-Communist, renewed hostilities against the Kurds, the Soviet Union whipped up a sharp propaganda campaign against it and threatened to raise the Kurdish question at the UN Security Council. At the same time Mongolia, probably at Soviet bidding, requested that an item accusing the Iraq Government of genocide be inscribed in the provisional agenda of the UN General Assembly. (Neither initiative came to anything because of lack of support from Afro-Asian members and a certain reluctance on the part of the Soviet Union to alienate Arab opinion as a whole.)* In 1965, in contrast, when the Soviet Union was on more friendly terms with the Baghdad Government, Soviet propaganda was pitched in a low key and no move was made to bring the question before the United Nations.

* The Kurds themselves sent a number of delegations to lobby at the United Nations between 1962 and 1968, without success.

41. Although the Kurdish problem presented the Soviet Union with an opportunity to fish in troubled waters - support for the Kurds in Iraq could have led to subversion of the Kurds in Iran, Turkey and elsewhere - she made little use of this opportunity during the period under review because of the overriding importance which she attached to her relations with the Iraq Government and the Arab world as a whole. While providing the Iraqi Kurds with moral support and a certain amount of financial assistance, she and other Communist countries have given them little else in the way of aid, though there have been unconfirmed reports of Czech arms being delivered to Barzani clandestinely through Eastern Turkey and the Soviet Red Cross is known to have sent him some provisions, clothing and medicines.

42. The continuance of the Kurdish dispute was a subject of reproof in the Soviet Union's dealings with the Iraqi Ba'ath prior to 1970 and she was undoubtedly active behind the scenes in encouraging the March settlement. The extent of her involvement is not certain, but in Pravda of 28 April 1970 the Secretary-General of the KDP was quoted as having praised the Soviet Union for her "noble efforts" in "putting an end to the fratricidal war ... and re-establishing calm and peace in Iraq..." The Soviet public will have understood from this that their Government were openly taking credit for bringing about the settlement.

43. It is likely that the Soviet Union watched the deterioration in Arab/Kurdish relations during 1971 with misgivings. It was widely believed that the high-level Soviet mission which visited Iraq in June 1971 under the leadership of Novikov emphasised to the Ba'ath Government their concern that the 1970 agreement should stick.

VII ATTITUDE OF HMG

44. During the period under review HMG's policy concerning the Kurdish question continued to be one of non-involvement. The public position was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in Parliament in June 1965, when he said: "HMG regret the fighting in Kurdistan, as any other instability in the Middle East, but we regard the Kurdish question as an internal Iraqi matter in which it would be inappropriate for us to interfere". In private, HMG have on appropriate occasions urged both sides to reach a peaceful settlement.

45. The Kurdish dispute is of special concern to Britain in that the installations of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), in which Shell and BP both have a 23.75% interest, are extremely vulnerable to Kurdish attack. In Qasim's time the Kurds shrank from sabotage, except of a very minor nature, but abducted two IPC employees in 1962 in a successful attempt to gain publicity. During hostilities in 1963, 1965 and 1966 there were a few minor incidents of sabotage, some of which may have been intended as a threat of more serious action. Fears of major sabotage, however, proved groundless, seemingly because the Kurds did not wish to alienate

Iraqi or Western opinion in general and the IPC in particular, given that they hoped that the oil would one day be the major source of their own income. The most serious incident in the history of the dispute took place in 1969, when damage to installations in Kirkuk caused by mortar fire affected operations for more than a week. All in all, it may be said that the Kurds represent the least of the threats to the supply of oil from Iraq.

46. Another way in which the Kurdish revolt has touched on HMG's interests is that the deployment of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan reduced Iraq's capability to attack Kuwait or operate elsewhere in the Gulf. This consideration, however, never provided adequate grounds for contemplating active support for the Kurds, which would have jeopardised HMG's considerable political and commercial interests in Iraq and caused anxiety in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. (Since the March 1970 agreement some redeployment of the Iraqi Army has in fact taken place, giving rise to anxiety in Kuwait in particular.)

47. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute given over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, the humanitarian consideration that arms might be used against Kurdish civilians has at times been an inhibiting factor in their policy on arms supplies to Iraq. Thus in 1963 they decided to phase the delivery of rockets, mortar bombs and other ammunition ordered by the Iraq armed forces; a similar decision was taken with regard to the supply of ammunition and rockets in 1964. But HMG have never actually refused to supply arms for this reason; other factors, particularly the possibility of weaning Iraq away from dependence on Soviet military supplies, have been considered more important.

48. Even during hostilities, HMG's policy of non-involvement did not stand in the way of cautious contact with the Kurds, with whom it was felt desirable to keep on as good terms as possible within the limitations of the situation. Thus, during the 1960's Kurdish emissaries were from time to time received by members of the FCO in London outside the office on an unofficial basis. In Baghdad, paradoxically, dealings tended to be less circumspect because many Kurds in touch with rebel groups were allowed to circulate freely and even participated in the Government. At other posts Kurdish emissaries were received if they requested interviews; letters for the Prime Minister or other Ministers were accepted and forwarded to the FCO, but it was customary not to give a written acknowledgement or send a reply.

49. The activities of Kurdish emissaries in London on occasion evoked protest from the Iraqi Ambassador - notably in 1965, when Jalal al Talabani appeared on BBC television. The question of granting visas to them was reviewed on a number of occasions: the policy was to issue visas, but sometimes to accompany their issue with a request (unenforceable) that the applicant should not take part in political or propaganda activities which might be embarrassing to HMG.

50. Despite HMG's policy of non-involvement, the Iraq Government have tended to suspect Britain of supplying the Kurds with aid in cooperation with Iran. (The fact that both are members of CENTO has lent colour to this myth.) In August 1965 the Iraqis claimed to have concrete evidence of this in the shape of arms and ammunition captured from the Kurds, but details which they later furnished to support the allegations were insufficient to permit identification of the items. HMG gave Iraq an assurance that they had not supplied arms to the Kurds.

51. HMG were reluctant to agree to numerous requests from Iraq between 1963 and 1966 that they should bring their influence to bear on the Shah to stop his aid to the Kurds, it being felt that there was a likelihood of causing irritation without affecting Iranian policy. On one occasion in 1965, however, HMG did undertake to transmit representations on behalf of the Iraqis, without entering into the merits of the complaint; and in January 1966, when a series of border incidents connected with the Kurdish war had created extreme tension between Iran and Iraq, HMG counselled moderation on both Governments at each other's request, but in a low key. Circumstances have not required the question of making representations to be considered since then.

52. The last occasion on which the Kurdish question was raised in Parliament was in December 1969, when Mr Rose asked whether HMG would seek to raise at the UN Human Rights Commission the dangers to peace in the Middle East arising from "the bombing and atrocities carried out by the Iraqi Government". The Minister of State for the FCO replied: "No. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for HMG to take the initiative in this matter at the UN. Our attitude towards action at the UN, were this subject to be raised in the Human Rights Commission, would depend on the case that is presented". This reply was in accordance with HMG's policy of non-involvement in the Kurdish dispute. It was also consistent with HMG's position that, where a consistent pattern of violations of human rights in the sense of a general policy is alleged to exist, the UN can legitimately consider the situation even though the allegation concerns an internal matter of a Member State. (Anything falling short of a consistent pattern, or a general policy, is probably covered by the domestic jurisdiction of the UN Charter (Article 2 (7)), except where an individual instance of violation is part of a general policy.) In 1963, when Mongolia requested that a charge of genocide be brought against the Iraq Government, but later dropped the request, HMG, as in 1969, did not commit themselves on the question, although it was felt within the Foreign Office at that time that Iraqi methods, including the bombing of Kurdish villages, had exceeded purely military requirements and might sustain a charge of a deliberate attempt to destroy the Kurds as a race.

53. HMG's policy of non-involvement meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid while fighting was in progress. A small technical assistance programme for Iraq has been in operation since 1970. Kurds, like all Iraqi citizens, have been eligible for awards under it if they are nominated by

the Iraq Government. HMG have also presented books and equipment to Suleimaniya University. HM Embassy in Baghdad were also in touch with War on Want to see if that body could provide medical supplies through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

CONCLUSIONS

54. Some progress has been made in implementing the 1970 settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Kurdish forces (Pish Merga) and the KDP, have yet to be resolved in detail. It is far from certain how long the settlement will survive and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of its implementation is growing. If this continues, there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

55. It is to the advantage of both the Iraq Government and the Kurds themselves that the settlement should endure. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house when the Kurds are in rebellion. For Britain, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

56. The reverse side of the coin is that with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country Iraq may be encouraged to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf (particularly in the period after British military withdrawal), or on the "Eastern front" with Israel. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it, paradoxically, a potential threat to stability in other areas of the Middle East. It is least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraqi régime, and Kuwait, who remains suspicious of Iraqi territorial ambitions despite Iraq's formal acceptance in 1963 of Kuwait's independence within the 1932 frontier.

57. If a permanent settlement is achieved by the Kurds in Iraq this could awaken the aspirations of the Kurdish populations of Iran and Turkey. In Iran the Kurds are comparatively quiescent at present, but in Turkey the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in April 1971.

58. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as that of Iraq herself. But the Soviet Union chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world and has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She undoubtedly played a part in promoting, and probably also in maintaining, the 1970 settlement.

59. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically-minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

Middle East Section,

Research Department,

Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DECLARATION

ISSUED BY THE IRAQI REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND

COUNCIL, 11 MARCH, 1970.

(The declaration begins with a long partisan review of the history of the Kurdish question and lists those measures taken by the Ba'athist régime in the last 18 months which, it claims, laid the foundation for the present agreement with the Kurds. What follows is a verbatim translation of the rest of the declaration.)

The Revolutionary Command Council initiated contacts with Mustafa al Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which led to an exchange of views. Both sides became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this declaration.

The Revolutionary Command Council reaffirms its determination to deepen and expand all effective measures to achieve cultural and economic development in the Kurdish area, seeking first of all to enable the Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and to ensure that they participate in a practical way in the earnest endeavours to build a homeland and the struggle to fulfil its great national aims. The Revolutionary Command Council has therefore reached the following decisions:

1. The Kurdish language shall be with Arabic the official language in areas populated by the Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic shall be taught in all schools where Kurdish is the language of instruction while Kurdish shall be taught in schools throughout the remainder of Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.
2. The participation of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between Kurds and others in filling public offices including sensitive and important posts in the State, such as Cabinet Portfolios, Army Command, etc. These have been and will remain among the important objectives which the revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. In recognising this the revolutionary Government stresses the necessity of achieving an equitable ratio in such appointments with due regard to efficiency, the proportionate distribution of the Kurdish population and the inequities which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past.
3. In view of the cultural and educational backwardness of the Kurdish population, a plan will be drawn up to make good this backwardness by:

(a) Hastening implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people and delegating to the Directorate-General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and directing radio and television programmes on Kurdish national issues.

(b) Reinstating, regardless of age, all students expelled or compelled to leave school because of the conflict in the area; failing reinstatement, to find appropriate solutions in individual cases.

(c) Building more schools in the Kurdish area. Raising the standard of education and admitting students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and scholarships in numbers proportionate to the Kurdish population.

4. In the administrative units in predominantly Kurdish areas officials shall be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language provided that the required number is available. Principal officials (Governor, Qaimaqam, Director of Police, Director of Security, etc), will be appointed and immediate action will be taken to set up Government machinery in the area in consultation with the High Committee established to supervise the implementation of this statement; this to be carried out in a manner which will strengthen national unity and the stability of the area.

5. The Government recognises the right of the Kurdish people to set up their own organisations for students, young people, women and teachers which will be affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

6. (a) The operative period of paragraphs 1 and 2 of RCC decision No 39 of 5 August, 1968 (this granted amnesty to all those involved in the Kurdish fighting up to that date) shall be extended up to the date of issue of this statement and shall extend to all those who participated in the conflict in the Kurdish area.

(b) Workers, officials and employees, both civilian and military, shall return to service irrespective of establishment. Civilians may be employed in the Kurdish area according to requirements.

7. (a) A committee of experts shall be set up to supervise the general development of the Kurdish area and to arrange compensation for the setbacks of recent years. An adequate budget is to be allocated for this purpose. The committee in question shall come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Northern Affairs.

(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up to ensure balanced development throughout Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

SECRET

(c) Pensions shall be paid to the families of the Kurdish armed movement and others martyred during the past regrettable hostilities; pensions will also be paid to those disabled or deformed as a result of the fighting. Special legislation will be enacted to implement this on the lines of the laws currently in force.

(d) Immediate action will be taken to relieve hardship by implementing housing projects, providing appropriate aid in cash and in kind and by arranging through the High Committee for the appropriate compensation to those in need who are not covered by the provisions of the paragraphs above.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former homes. The inhabitants of villages in areas not designated for habitation and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and properly compensated.

9. The Agrarian Reform Law shall be quickly implemented in the Kurdish area and amended in such a way as to guarantee the end of the feudal system and the acquisition by the peasants of suitable plots of land. Taxes on such land which accumulated over the period of the conflict shall be waived.

10. It has been agreed that the Interim Constitution shall be amended as follows:

(a) The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

(b) The following paragraphs shall be added to Article 4 of the Constitution:

"The Kurdish language shall be, with Arabic, the official language in the Kurdish area."

(c) The above will be incorporated into the permanent Constitution.

11. The (Kurdish) broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be handed over to the Government. This is to be done when the final stages of the agreement are implemented.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

13. The Governorates Law shall be amended to conform with the substance of this statement.

SECRET

14. Following the publication of this statement the necessary measures shall be taken in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units in areas populated by a Kurdish majority; these areas to be decided by an official census yet to be carried out. The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the Kurdish people's exercise of all their national rights as a guarantee of their enjoying autonomy (al-hukm-adh-dhati) within the wider national unity. Until this administrative unity is achieved Kurdish national affairs shall be co-ordinated by periodic meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As autonomy is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic the exploitation of natural resources in the area will naturally fall under the jurisdiction of the Republican authorities.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a ratio corresponding with their proportion of the Iraqi population.

(The declaration concludes with general exhortations.)

RR 6/10

(6 December, 1971)

Departmental Series No.17

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ, 1963-1971

SUMMARY

1. Introduction. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census). There were various Kurdish tribal revolts in Iraq under the monarchy. When Qasim seized power in 1958 there was an initial period of cooperation between him and the Kurds, but in 1961 Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party led a widespread revolt against the Government. Neither side gained a decisive advantage in the hostilities which ensued. (Paragraphs 1-5)
2. In 1963 the Ba'ath Government renewed hostilities against the Kurds, but again there was a military stalemate. In February 1964 a cease-fire was arranged, but hostilities were resumed in 1965. (Paragraphs 6-10)
3. In June 1966 the Iraqi Prime Minister, Dr Bazzaz, announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan, but when he was dismissed from office in August hopes of a settlement faded. (Paragraphs 11-13)
4. In March 1970 the terms of a new settlement providing for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic were agreed between the Kurds and the Ba'ath Government. But progress in implementing this agreement has been slow and some crucial problems, including the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, remain unresolved. (Paragraphs 14-23)
5. Apart from tribal rivalries, a division exists within the Kurdish ranks between the tribal elements led by Barzani and the Left-wing urban elements represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. Talabani and Ahmad were expelled from the Kurdish Democratic Party in 1964 and since then Barzani's authority has been supreme; but if a firm peace were established the radical elements would be likely to make their influence felt again. (Paragraphs 24-27)
6. Organisation of the Kurdish army. It has employed guerrilla tactics with success. (Paragraphs 28-30)
7. Attitudes of other countries in the region. The Syrians sent troops to help the Iraq Government in 1963 but have not since been involved in the dispute. Nor have the Turks, who, with a Kurdish population of some 3 million, have a considerable Kurdish problem of their own. Iran has

covertly supplied the Kurds with arms and finance, originally in order to pre-empt Soviet involvement on the side of the Kurds and more generally in order to weaken the Iraq Government. Israel has supplied arms and military advisers, likewise in secret. (Paragraphs 31-39)

8. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and was active behind the scenes in promoting the 1970 settlement. While providing the Kurds with moral support, she and other Communist countries have given them little in the way of material aid. (Paragraphs 40-43)

9. HMG's policy has been one of non-involvement. The Kurdish dispute has been of special concern to Britain because of the possibility of sabotage to the oil installations in northern Iraq during hostilities; the reverse side of the coin, however, is that a final settlement of the Kurdish dispute would enable the Iraqi régime to redispense troops tied up in the north and would perhaps encourage them to indulge in foreign adventures in the Persian Gulf area. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute attached over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, on some occasions in the past they have phased the delivery of arms ordered by the Iraqi forces in order to hinder their use against Kurdish civilians. The Iraqis have, mistakenly, suspected HMG of cooperating with Iran in supplying the Kurds with arms. The Kurdish question has not been discussed by the relevant bodies of the UN and HMG have therefore not had to determine what attitude they would adopt if such a discussion took place. (Paragraphs 44-53)

10. Conclusions. It is far from certain how long the 1970 settlement will survive. (Paragraphs 54-59)

Annex: Translation of part of the declaration issued by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, 11 March 1970.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Department Memorandum LR 6/9G of 1963 surveyed the Kurdish problem in Iraq between 1958 and 1963. The present memorandum examines developments since 1963.

2. There are probably between 6 and 7 million Kurds in the Middle East. Their racial origins are obscure; they combine the physical characteristics of various races. Their language, however, is of Indo-European origin and bears a close relation to Persian. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, although a few tribes are Shi'i. A hardy and dour mountain race with a reputation for brigandage, they have never been united politically as one people but have mostly lived a tribal life with its attendant disputes and differing dialects and customs. "Kurdistan" - the area inhabited by them as a more or less homogeneous community constituting the majority of the population - is at present divided between Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with small overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union.*

3. The Kurds in Iraq are understood to constitute between 15 and 20 per cent of the total population (8.3 million in the 1965 census) - a larger percentage than in any other country. Thanks partly to the mountainous nature of their terrain, they have managed to maintain a large degree of independence from the central Government. In the tribal areas their basic desire is to maintain this independence and to be free to continue their traditional way of life - farming and herding - without interference. For the urban elements, however, which now make up about a quarter of the Kurdish population in Iraq, the question of equality of opportunity within the Iraqi State has become increasingly important in recent years. The demands of the Iraqi Kurds therefore include at one and the same time autonomy for the Kurdish region and full rights for themselves as Iraqi citizens. The establishment of an independent Kurdistan uniting all the Kurds at present divided by international frontiers is not an immediate aim,** though it has long been the dream of almost every Kurd.

4. During the period of British administration (1920-1932) steps were taken to improve conditions among the Kurds in Iraq, but efforts to establish

* The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) envisaged the setting up of an autonomous Kurdistan, but was never ratified because of Turkish opposition. Instead, the Kurds found themselves divided by the international frontiers of Turkey, Iraq and Syria where under the Ottoman Empire only provincial boundaries had existed.

** The 1966 Programme of the Kurdish Democratic Party stated that the Kurds were fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic".

a special administration for Kurdish districts were hampered by a series of tribal revolts. When Iraq became fully independent in 1932 she made a formal declaration to the League of Nations guaranteeing the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. This guaranteed them equality before the law with other Iraqi nationals and stipulated, inter alia, areas in which Kurdish was to be an official language side by side with Arabic and in which officials should if possible be Kurds. It also promised the allocation of official funds for the provision of primary education in the Kurdish language. The Government, however, did little to honour this declaration and concerned itself primarily with enforcing its authority in Kurdistan. Kurdish discontent led to a number of uprisings, the most serious of which was led by the tribal leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani in 1943-1945. He was defeated by the Iraqi army, aided by tribes in Government pay, and fled to Iran, where he joined the short-lived Kurdish "Republic of Mahabad". After its collapse he made his way with a number of his followers to the Soviet Union.

5. When Qasim deposed the monarchy in 1958 he gave the Kurds promises of equality with the Arab population of Iraq and allowed Barzani to return from exile. After an initial period of cooperation, however, Kurdish opinion hardened against the Government because of its neglect of their interests and its arming of tribes hostile to the Barzanis. In July 1961 the Barzanis took to arms and defeated these enemies. Supported by other tribes and by members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, they then proceeded to take over Government posts in the north. By the end of August the semi-circle of mountains from north-west of Mosul to south-east of Kirkuk was effectively under Kurdish control. Barzani then presented Qasim with a number of demands, including autonomy for the Kurds, to which Qasim replied by launching a full-scale military offensive against the Kurds in September. Hostilities continued intermittently until Qasim's fall in February 1963, neither side gaining a decisive advantage. The Government forces held the main towns in the North - Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimaniya - but the Kurds controlled most of the rest of their territory.

II. THE KURDISH WAR, 1963-1969

The 1963 Ba'athist campaign

6. Almost immediately after the Ba'ath Party came to power in February 1963 a cease-fire was arranged. Negotiations began in the following month, when it was announced that the Government were prepared to grant the Kurds "national rights on the basis of decentralisation". Kurdish demands for a share in oil revenues and other State revenues on a per capita basis and the exclusion of Arab troops from Kurdistan proved unacceptable to the Government and, although they made counter-proposals, it soon became apparent that the negotiations were getting nowhere. In June the Government threw a Kurdish delegation into prison and launched a new military offensive. This was managed with more drive than had been

displayed under Qasim, and was more ruthless and bloody. But by the time winter closed in the army had secured control of only a small fraction of the mountainous area of Kurdistan and it was evident that the Government had little hope of imposing a military solution.

1964 negotiations and Barzani's dispute with Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani

7. In February 1964 a cease-fire was announced between the Kurds and the Government which, since the ousting of the Ba'ath in November 1963, had been Nasserist in complexion. An official statement by President Arif promised the Kurds national rights "in a single fraternal national unity", proclaimed a general amnesty, and pledged the Government to undertake the rehabilitation of the north and reinstate Kurdish officials and employees there. There followed innumerable visits to the north by Government representatives in an attempt to get the Kurds to accept something less than autonomy.

8. The Kurds meanwhile split into two main factions. The first, led by Barzani, who was both the dominant tribal leader and Chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), took the view that every effort must be made to test the Government's sincerity and see whether an agreement could be reached. The second, a group of younger and more radically inclined KDP members led by Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal al Talabani, early came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained from dealings with the Government. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the KDP at Qala Diza in July 1964, reportedly attended by some 900 delegates, at which 14 senior party members, including Ahmad and Talabani and all but one of the party's Politbureau, were formally expelled and a new Politbureau was elected. An armed clash then took place between the rival groups, as a result of which Ahmad and Talabani fled to Iran with some 400 of their supporters. (They were given sanctuary at Hamadan by the Iranian authorities.)

The 1965 campaign

9. After more than a year of truce, marked by increasingly desultory negotiations, hostilities were resumed by the Government in the first week of April, 1965. By then most of the dissident Kurdish group had made their peace with Barzani and returned from Iran, though Ibrahim Ahmad remained there unreconciled and Talabani spent the summer abroad trying to rally international support for the Kurdish cause.

10. The 1965 campaign went no better for the Government than previous ones and by the end of the year it was once again evident that deadlock had been reached on the military front.*

The Bazzaz Proposals, 1966

11. Early in 1966 there were indications that Dr Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, who in the previous autumn had been appointed Iraq's first civilian Premier since the 1958 revolution, was in favour of negotiating peace with the Kurds rather than mounting a new spring offensive. His advice was over-ruled and a new offensive began in May, but the Government forces almost immediately suffered a severe setback near Rowanduz and early in June the campaign was called off.

12. On 29 June 1966 Dr Bazzaz announced a 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. His twelve points were, in summary:

- (i) Equal national rights for Kurds and Arabs in Iraq.
- (ii) Decentralisation: elected local assemblies to have wide powers.
- (iii) Kurdish to be recognised as an official language, side by side with Arabic, in areas where the Kurds formed a majority.
- (iv) Kurdish representation in the National Assembly on a proportional basis.
- (v) Public offices and appointments to be open to Kurds.
- (vi) Equality of educational opportunity.
- (vii) Local officials to be Kurds if sufficient available.
- (viii) A measure of political freedom and freedom of expression for the Kurds.
- (ix) A general amnesty and reinstatement of Kurdish officials and employees.
- (x) Kurdish members of the armed forces and police to report to their units. Others under arms to surrender their weapons.
- (xi) Rehabilitation of the North.
- (xii) Resettlement of displaced individuals and groups.

* Two notable features of this campaign were Kurdish accusations that poison gas was used and the presence of UAR troops in a camp near Baghdad (under the auspices of the Iraq-UAR Joint Military Command), which helped to release Iraqi troops from internal security duties to take part in the war.

13. Although the plan was vague in parts and left a great deal unsaid* it seemed to provide an adequate basis for a settlement and it was felt that as long as Bazzaz remained in office there was a fair chance of progress. The plan was officially welcomed by Barzani. By mid-July, however the Kurds were becoming disillusioned by lack of any positive signs of implementation, and when Bazzaz was dismissed in August hopes of a settlement faded.

Continued stalemate in 1967

14. Although full-scale hostilities were not resumed in 1966 or 1967, Government forces remained deployed in the north and were involved in some skirmishes with Kurdish forces. The Government endeavoured to weaken Barzani's position by giving support to Talabani, who had again broken with him; sporadic armed clashes took place between the rival Kurdish groups, but Talabani's faction was too weak to present a serious challenge to Barzani's authority.

The return of the Ba'ath, 1968

15. The Ba'athist Government which came to power in July 1968 did not at first show any sign of having better ideas on how to deal with the Kurds than those which the previous Ba'athist Government had had in 1963 or those which other administrations had applied in the interim. They thus continued the policy which they had inherited from the previous Government of containing the extent of the area controlled by the Kurds and supporting Talabani's faction with money and arms.

16. After a time, however, they began to give effect to certain of the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966. Thus Kurdish was made the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish areas; a university was established in Suleimaniya; a Kurdish Academy of Letters was set up; an amnesty was declared for those who had taken part in the fighting; and a measure of decentralisation of power to the governorates was introduced. In spite of these propitiatory gestures, skirmishing continued throughout 1969.

* According to Ismet Sharif Vanly (Le Kurdistan Irakien, Entité National, Neuchatel 1970) there were also three secret clauses in which the Government undertook

- (a) to create a new Liwa of Dohuk, comprising the Kurdish area then within the Liwa of Mosul,
- (b) to free all political prisoners in Iraq, and
- (c) to legalise the Kurdish Democratic Party.

III. THE MARCH 1970 SETTLEMENT

17. By January 1970 it became evident that serious negotiations were taking place between the Ba'ath and representatives of Barzani under cover of a de facto cease-fire. The successful outcome of these negotiations was announced by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council on 11 March. The terms of the announcement* followed fairly closely the proposals put forward by Dr Bazzaz in 1966 and contained the following main points:

- (i) The Kurds were to enjoy political rights and autonomy within the framework of the Iraq Republic. The areas of Kurdish autonomy were to be determined by an official census.
- (ii) The existence of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd, was to be recognised in the Constitution.
- (iii) A Kurd was to be appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.
- (iv) The Kurds were to share in the legislative power on a proportional basis.
- (v) The Kurds were to participate in the Government and in Government departments without discrimination.
- (vi) Officials in Kurdish areas were to be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language.
- (vii) Kurdish and Arabic were both to be official languages in the Kurdish areas; Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in these areas.
- (viii) All former Kurdish military and civil officials, students and workers were to be reinstated.
- (ix) Educational and cultural facilities for Kurds were to be expanded.
- (x) The Kurds were to have their own organisations for students, youth, women and teachers, affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

* For a more detailed text of the announcement see the Annex to this memorandum.

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY

- (xi) Inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages were to be restored to their former homes.
- (xii) Relief measures for Kurds affected by the hostilities were to be put in hand.
- (xiii) A Kurdish development commission with an adequate budget was to be established and a special economic plan for the Kurdish region was to be prepared.
- (xiv) Agrarian reform was to be speeded up in Kurdish areas.
- (xv) The exploitation of natural resources in the autonomous area was to be the responsibility of the Republican authorities.
- (xvi) The Kurdish broadcasting station and all heavy weapons were to be surrendered during the final stages of the implementation of the agreement.

18. The published agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol, reportedly containing the following provisions:

- (i) A joint committee was to be set up to supervise implementation of the agreement.
- (ii) One of the tasks of this committee would be to resettle the Pish Merga (Kurdish rebel forces), except for about 6,000 men who would remain in the force. During the period of resettlement, which would be in five unspecified stages, the Government would pay for the general upkeep of the force.
- (iii) The Government would disarm and disband all Kurdish forces opposed to Barzani, and the Iraqi armed forces would withdraw to their "normal positions".
- (iv) The KDP was to be allowed to operate freely in the Kurdish region and to publish its own newspaper.
- (v) All persons formerly in Government service who took part in the Kurdish rebellion would be permitted to resume employment without loss of seniority. Those who had served with the Kurdish armed forces would be permitted to count that service as if they had served in the Iraqi armed forces.
- (vi) A nation-wide census would take place within one year to define the region of Kurdish majority.
- (vii) Although the Iraqi national flag could not be altered immediately, a Kurdish symbol would be incorporated when next the flag was changed.

19. Although the secret clauses went some way towards removing obscurities in the published terms, some important points, such as the exact nature of Kurdish autonomy and the amount to be allocated by the Iraq Government for the development of the Kurdish region, remained to be clarified; it was evident that further negotiation would be needed on these and other points before the settlement could be considered comprehensive.

20. Progress in implementing the agreement during 1970 was not speedy. The amnesty was generally observed, five Kurdish Ministers were appointed, development activities began in Kurdistan, and a number of gestures were made by the Government in the cultural and education fields. On the other hand the difficulties over the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President and the creation of a National Assembly had still not been resolved in 1971 (see paragraph 22 below). The Government withdrew their support from Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad, who made their submission to Barzani and formally merged their "Kurdish Revolutionary Party" with the KDP. A number of the Pish Merga returned to their civilian occupations and a number were formed into a Kurdish frontier force, under the Ministry of the Interior, but Barzani retained some 20,000 men under arms and kept both his heavy weapons and his broadcasting station. (In March 1971 it was reported that he had handed them over, but in fact he retained the major part of his serviceable equipment.) The future of the KDP, which was among the questions not satisfactorily spelt out in the agreement, remained unresolved; declarations of its identity of outlook with the Ba'ath were issued from time to time but no practical links were forged. A clear-cut picture of future administrative arrangements within Kurdistan also failed to emerge: there can be little doubt that by "autonomy" the Government meant no more than a modest measure of regional self-administration, whereas the Kurds intended it to mean a good deal more.

21. The all-important question of the physical extent of the area of Kurdish autonomy, which was to be determined by a census, also remained unresolved: the census was announced for October 1970 but was postponed sine die shortly before the appointed date. The main difficulty in fixing the boundary concerned the status of the governorate of Kirkuk, which contains the main oil-producing region of Iraq (although the country's large reserves are in the south) and has a mixed population of Turkomans, Kurds and Arabs. (The position is complicated by the fact that many Kurdish families were driven from their homes during hostilities and Arabs were settled in their place.) While accepting in March 1970 that the exploitation of the oilfields should be under the jurisdiction of the central Government, the Kurds have long insisted that Kirkuk should be their capital and are not prepared to accept its exclusion from the autonomous region. The Government, for their part, could hardly be expected to accept a boundary which left the oilfields on the wrong side of the line. Given the impossibility of the two sides agreeing on this point it was perhaps as well in the short term that the census was postponed, since the passions which would have been aroused by it on both sides might have jeopardised the implementation of other parts of the agreement. In the long term, however, no settlement is likely to be permanent unless the territorial question is solved.

22. The postponement of the census did not immediately provoke a reaction from the Kurds. Their first priority was evidently to see that the Government went ahead with reconstruction and development in the north and it was felt that as long as progress continued to be made in this and other fields they would continue to observe the truce, though their patience might not be inexhaustible. The Government, for their part, needing the stability that the cessation of hostilities could bring, favoured a policy of reconciliation. (It is noteworthy in this connexion that the political reputation of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the strong man of the Iraqi Ba'ath, is to some extent linked to the March 1970 agreement, which he brought about in the face of considerable opposition from within the party.) In 1971 the Government at various times announced plans for economic development in the north, especially in the tourist field. Their relaxation of restrictions on members of the diplomatic corps travelling in the north suggested that they considered reconciliation to be proceeding smoothly enough. Nevertheless, the appointment of a Kurdish Vice-President has still not taken place. (It is believed that Barzani is unwilling to see the post filled until its functions are defined: if it is to be a sinecure, he sees no point in offering a hostage to the Ba'ath.) Nor has the National Assembly been created, despite forecasts in the President's speech at the 1971 celebrations of the July Revolution. (The Ba'ath have still been unable to formulate terms under which the non-Ba'athi elements - the Kurds and the Communists - would be prepared to participate in national political life, and which would not jeopardise the Ba'ath Party's supreme rôle to an unacceptable degree.) There were indeed some specific indications of a deterioration in Kurdish-Government relations during 1971, such as a dispute over the status of the Feili Kurds - a tribe mainly of Iranian origin (and citizenship), many of whom work as labourers and porters in Baghdad and who were claiming Iraqi citizenship - and reports of skirmishes in the north in which pro-Talabani tribes appear to have been involved. Presumably in response to Kurdish complaints, the Government set up a new Higher Committee for Kurdish Affairs in May, with the ostensible purpose of implementing the 1970 agreement more actively; but since none of its members was a Kurd it can hardly have inspired much confidence in the Kurdish side; indeed, the Committee's attempt to co-opt the Chief Editor of Al Ta'akhi was rebuffed. There were also reports that Barzani had put further demands to the Iraq Government during the summer, including requests that ID 150 million per annum should be devoted to Kurdish areas and that a National Assembly should be set up with one-third Kurdish membership. Finally the attempt to assassinate Barzani in September 1971, which was widely held to have been the work of the central Government, but for which the Ba'ath leadership officially denied responsibility, must have increased the suspicion with which Barzani has always regarded the Baghdad Government and set back further the process of reconciliation. Barzani's feelings were shown in an interview with the Beirut French newspaper, L'Orient le Jour, on 18 November, in which he said that he did not trust the Baghdad authorities and feared a surprise attack by the Iraqi army.

23. In short, the situation seems almost to have reached an impasse again and it appears unlikely that a solution to the outstanding problems will be found. If Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of implementation of the agreement continues to grow, there may soon be further outbreaks of fighting serious enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter.

IV POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH REVOLT

Political

24. Since 1961, when Barzani established himself as the dominant tribal leader and the KDP joined forces with him, the Iraqi Kurds have presented a more united front than during previous revolts. The feud which has continued on and off since 1964 between Barzani on the one hand and Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad on the other, however, is a symptom of the difference of outlook which separates the tribal population of the mountainous north from the urban population of the south of Kurdistan and the intellectuals in Baghdad and elsewhere. As long as the settlement remains incomplete and Barzani remains in reasonable health - he is now nearly 70 years of age - his position as the overall leader of the Iraqi Kurds is unlikely to be challenged,* but if a lasting peace is made serious divisions within the Kurdish ranks are likely to reappear. The tribal leaders, who will not necessarily remain united among themselves, will wish to preserve their authority in Kurdistan, whereas the more radical elements will want to see the KDP play a dominant role in the administration of the area and pursue progressive policies, including social and agrarian reform. In the long term the intelligentsia could find that they have more in common with the Arab socialists in Baghdad than with their kinsmen; this in part explains Talabani's past dealings with the Baghdad authorities.

25. Since the KDP is the only Kurdish political organisation in Iraq, any future struggle for control of the Kurdish movement is likely to take place within it. It is essentially a nationalist party without a coherent ideology. In the early days of Qasim's rule it associated itself with the Communists for tactical reasons and was infiltrated by them, but their influence has probably been negligible since 1960, when the party was purged; at the same time the Communist bias in its programme was watered down. The new programme adopted in 1964, which was revised in 1966, is fairly radical

* Vanli, op.cit., describes Barzani as both a protector of the traditional chiefs vis-à-vis the party radicals and a "catalyst of all the national forces". A national hero since the days of the Mahabad Republic and his exile in the Soviet Union, Barzani has unrivalled experience as leader of the Kurdish national movement and is at his best in a crisis. But his vision is limited and he can be stubborn and inflexible. His personal ideas as to future political arrangements in Kurdistan seem to be vague.

in emphasis*; but some of its language appears to be a legacy from the old programme adopted in Qasim's time.

26. Since 1964, when Barzani moved against Talabani and other Left-wing members of the Politbureau, the party has been largely subordinate to his authority, and in the last elections to the party's Central Committee, in July 1970, Right-wing members came out on top. If a firm peace were established, however, and the party were able to become more active politically, the more radical elements would probably make their influence increasingly felt within it.

27. The organisational framework of the Kurdish revolt is complex, covering as it does a large and varied geographical area and many disparate elements of population. The principal organs of Kurdish authority in the period 1966-1970 were the Revolutionary Council, the Executive Bureau and the KDP Politbureau. Vanli** describes the Revolutionary Council as a kind of elected parliament of 62 members, which exercises supreme authority and meets every four months (or more frequently if requested by the President, by a majority of its own members, or by the Executive Bureau). The Executive Bureau he describes as a Ministerial Cabinet responsible for

* Article 2 of the programme states that the party is "a democratic, revolutionary and avant-garde party which represents the interests of the workers, peasants, salaried persons, artisans and revolutionary intellectuals of Iraqi Kurdistan". Article 3 states that the party is fighting "for liberation and the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraq Republic". Article 5 states that the party has recourse to "the progressive scientific doctrines which correspond to the realities of our Kurdish people". Article 6 states that the party is fighting for the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Iraq and for freedom of speech, religion, political organisation, etc. Article 13 demands the allocation of a percentage of Iraq's oil revenues to Kurdistan, proportionate to its population. Article 14 advocates agrarian reform in Kurdistan, specially adapted to the conditions there and aimed at establishing a minimum acreage for each peasant and abolishing the feudal system; it also suggests ways of modernising agriculture in Kurdistan. Article 16 contains a section on taxes, which should be "just and based on direct and progressive taxes on income and hereditary wealth and on the reduction of indirect taxes which hit the working classes". Other articles concern the development of industry and communications, the development of Kurdish culture and education, the adoption of a "non-aligned" and "anti-imperialist" foreign policy, etc.

** op. cit. Appendices VII and VIII of this book contain French translations of the texts of the Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Revolution and the Administrative Law of the Revolution, both dated 17 October 1964.

controlling all the organs of the Kurdish revolt, including the army. Considerable influence is exerted on it by the KDP Politbureau, which designates a number of its members - apparently a majority.* (This is where the formal link between the KDP and the administration as a whole is to be found). Barzani is Chairman of all three bodies, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and is thus in a position to dominate the whole machine.

Military

28. The Iraqi Kurds can mobilise some 25,000 men. Arms in their possession include rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, and some artillery pieces. They also possess radio equipment and some motor transport. A substantial proportion of their small arms have been captured or stolen from the Iraqi army. Most of the rest, and the majority of their heavier weapons, were supplied by Iran and Israel between 1963 and 1966. They may also have received some arms from Czechoslovakia, but not on the same scale.

29. In the late sixties the Pish Merga were reportedly divided into ten "brigades", recruited on a local basis and enjoying a great deal of independence. Their activities were not fully co-ordinated, though a degree of central control was exercised by Barzani as Commander-in-Chief. Their effectiveness was to some extent limited by their reluctance to operate outside their regions. (On the other hand, the small groups used by the Kurds for commando activities are extremely mobile considering the nature of the terrain.) Barzani himself, who had round him a guard of tribesmen some 200 strong, was constantly on the move during the hostilities in order to escape detection. (His family was usually with him. His third son, Idris, acted as his aide de camp.)

30. Kurdish military organisation seems to have improved considerably between 1963 and 1966 as the result partly of Israeli instruction and partly of an influx of Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi army. During hostilities the Kurds employed guerrilla tactics with fair success, not attempting to hold towns but drawing the Iraqi army on into the mountains and harassing it there. Ground lost in the summer was usually regained in the winter, when snow and rain presented the Government forces with severe difficulties. For the Kurds hostilities were essentially defensive in nature, aimed partly at keeping open their supply routes from Iran. They did not take advantage of every opportunity to discomfit the Iraqi army; nor did they make as much use as they might of the weapon of sabotage, to which the oil installations

* Other members of the Executive Bureau are representatives of the military, the tribes, other civilians, and the Christian (Assyrian) Community. The Politbureau itself is elected from among members of the KDP Central Committee, which is elected by a congress of KDP members.

in the Kirkuk area in particular are extremely vulnerable (see paragraph 45 below). Confinement of the fighting to the hills, with no attempt to control the major towns, suited Barzani since he was thereby able to maintain a claim for tribal structure in the administration.

V. ATTITUDES OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO
THE KURDISH PROBLEM

Syria

31. In 1963, when Ba'athist régimes were in power in both Baghdad and Damascus, the Syrians sent about two brigades of troops openly to Iraq to assist in the Kurdish war and published propaganda about helping Iraq to free herself of "separatists and bandits". Since 1963 the two countries have not been on good terms and Syria has pursued a policy of non-involvement in the dispute. Although Syrian Kurds are thought to have helped their Iraqi brethren financially and there has been some coming and going over the Syrian border during hostilities, the Syrian authorities have kept a fairly tight rein on Kurdish activities. Kurdish nationalism is no longer considered a live issue within Syria, the Kurds there being too few to carry much weight (about 300,000).

Turkey

32. Turkey has not involved herself openly in the dispute but has relaxed controls on the Iraqi border during hostilities. She would no doubt welcome a permanent settlement in Iraq if it meant greater stability on her south-eastern border, but she must have fears that autonomy for the Kurds in Iraq would encourage the aspirations of her own Kurdish population, numbering some 3 million. Her own Kurdish problem attracted attention in April 1971, when one of the reasons given by the Turkish Government for imposing martial law was the threat of a Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey. (The Turks indicated in confidence that the trouble among the Kurds, particularly the students, was being directed from East Germany.) At a press conference on 1 May, however, the Turkish Prime Minister said that the threat from the Kurds was potential rather than actual and that the imposition of martial law allowed the security forces full control of the situation.

Iran

33. It is believed that the Kurds received financial aid from the Iranian Government in Qasim's time and that some Kurds were given training in heavy weapons units of the Iranian army.

34. Iran's distrust of the Ba'ath Government and of its dealings with Nasser led her to increase her aid to the Kurds substantially in 1963, though the Shah resisted the temptation to declare open support for their cause. Since 1963 Iran has been the Kurds' most important ally, supplying

them with arms and other equipment, provisions, cash, training, and rear communications. Iranian aid is one of the "open secrets" of the Middle East and has frequently been referred to by the Shah in private as his "Kurdish card" in terms of his relations with the Iraq Government. It is evident that, although he risked stimulating the ambitions of Iran's own Kurdish population and provoking Iraq to retaliatory measures in the Shatt-al-Arab and Khuzistan by supporting Barzani, he felt that he could not let slip such an opportunity to embarrass and weaken the Iraq régime. He also saw his action as pre-empting Soviet involvement with the Kurds; Soviet support for them had been limited almost entirely to verbal support in Qasim's time, but in view of the extreme antipathy of the Soviet Union to the Ba'ath régime of 1963 there were widespread fears that it might take on a more substantial form and threaten the security of other countries in the area as well as Iraq.

35. The Iraq Government have on several occasions complained to Iran about her support for the Kurds, notably in January 1966 when the Iraqi garrison at Panjwin was cut off by the Kurds and subjected to artillery bombardment. Iraq then accused Iran both of supplying the Kurds with arms and of allowing her territory to be used for mounting the bombardment. The Iranian Government rejected the charges.

36. In addition to supplying aid of their own, the Iranians have allowed Israel to send aid to the Iraqi Kurds via their territory. Most other aid, including Red Cross aid,* has also been delivered through Iran and most journalists visiting Iraqi Kurdistan over the past eight years have entered across the Iranian border with the connivance of the Iranian authorities.

37. The March 1970 settlement deprived Iran of a weapon against Iraq and, if it lasts, will increase Iraq's ability to cause trouble in Iranian Kurdistan. Iran can therefore be expected to work against the settlement, which came as something of a blow to her interests. But the fact that she was unable to prevent it in the first place despite considerable (financial) pressure on Barzani shows that she has only a limited influence and cannot force the Iraqi Kurds to take up arms again. However, Barzani is still in touch with the Iranians and if he decided that further hostilities were inevitable he would look to Iran, as before, for money, arms and supplies. So long as Irano-Iraqi relations remain strained, it is likely that Iran would meet Barzani's requests.

38. At the moment the Kurds in Iran, who number about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, are comparatively quiescent, and the Iranian Government by a mixture of the carrot (land reform, TV station, radio programmes, etc.) and the stick

* This has been considerable. According to Vanli (op.cit.) eight national Red Cross organisations, of which he mentions by name only those of Sweden and Hungary, have sent relief supplies under the auspices of the International Red Cross.

(stern suppression of disturbances, exile of troublemakers, etc.) has fairly firm control over them. But there is still a legacy of discontent, stemming from the unsuccessful attempt to set up an independent Kurdish Republic in Iran in 1946, which could be exploited against the Iranian Government, particularly if the Iraqi Kurds were to achieve full autonomy or were to come to a permanent settlement with the Iraq Government. Therefore, while it is in Iran's interests that the Iraqi Kurds should be encouraged to fight the Iraq Government for what they want, it may not be in Iran's interests that they should be successful. The Iranian aim is to keep trouble firmly on the Iraqi side of the border.

Israel

39. Israel has supplied arms covertly to the Kurds at least since 1964, sending them by way of Iran with the cooperation of the Iranian authorities. She has also provided military advisers, training for Kurdish officers, and some cash. Her aim has been to weaken the Iraq Government generally, and, specifically, to tie down in northern Iraq troops which would otherwise be available for hostilities against her. She is thought to have supplied rifles, machine-guns, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Her aid is a better kept secret than that of Iran but is known to the Iraqi authorities and has sometimes been the subject of speculation in the press, in the Arab world and elsewhere.

VI. ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

40. The Soviet Union has constantly advocated that the Kurds should enjoy national rights within the framework of the Iraq Republic and has criticised successive governments there for their treatment of the Kurds. The degree of her criticism has, however, tended to vary according to her opinion of the government of the day. Thus, when the 1963 Ba'ath Government, which was strongly anti-Communist, renewed hostilities against the Kurds, the Soviet Union whipped up a sharp propaganda campaign against it and threatened to raise the Kurdish question at the UN Security Council. At the same time Mongolia, probably at Soviet bidding, requested that an item accusing the Iraq Government of genocide be inscribed in the provisional agenda of the UN General Assembly. (Neither initiative came to anything because of lack of support from Afro-Asian members and a certain reluctance on the part of the Soviet Union to alienate Arab opinion as a whole.)* In 1965, in contrast, when the Soviet Union was on more friendly terms with the Baghdad Government, Soviet propaganda was pitched in a low key and no move was made to bring the question before the United Nations.

* The Kurds themselves sent a number of delegations to lobby at the United Nations between 1962 and 1968, without success.

41. Although the Kurdish problem presented the Soviet Union with an opportunity to fish in troubled waters - support for the Kurds in Iraq could have led to subversion of the Kurds in Iran, Turkey and elsewhere - she made little use of this opportunity during the period under review because of the overriding importance which she attached to her relations with the Iraq Government and the Arab world as a whole. While providing the Iraqi Kurds with moral support and a certain amount of financial assistance, she and other Communist countries have given them little else in the way of aid, though there have been unconfirmed reports of Czech arms being delivered to Barzani clandestinely through Eastern Turkey and the Soviet Red Cross is known to have sent him some provisions, clothing and medicines.

42. The continuance of the Kurdish dispute was a subject of reproof in the Soviet Union's dealings with the Iraqi Ba'ath prior to 1970 and she was undoubtedly active behind the scenes in encouraging the March settlement. The extent of her involvement is not certain, but in Pravda of 28 April 1970 the Secretary-General of the KDP was quoted as having praised the Soviet Union for her "noble efforts" in "putting an end to the fratricidal war ... and re-establishing calm and peace in Iraq..." The Soviet public will have understood from this that their Government were openly taking credit for bringing about the settlement.

43. It is likely that the Soviet Union watched the deterioration in Arab/Kurdish relations during 1971 with misgivings. It was widely believed that the high-level Soviet mission which visited Iraq in June 1971 under the leadership of Novikov emphasised to the Ba'ath Government their concern that the 1970 agreement should stick.

VII ATTITUDE OF HMG

44. During the period under review HMG's policy concerning the Kurdish question continued to be one of non-involvement. The public position was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in Parliament in June 1965, when he said: "HMG regret the fighting in Kurdistan, as any other instability in the Middle East, but we regard the Kurdish question as an internal Iraqi matter in which it would be inappropriate for us to interfere". In private, HMG have on appropriate occasions urged both sides to reach a peaceful settlement.

45. The Kurdish dispute is of special concern to Britain in that the installations of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), in which Shell and BP both have a 23.75% interest, are extremely vulnerable to Kurdish attack. In Qasim's time the Kurds shrank from sabotage, except of a very minor nature, but abducted two IPC employees in 1962 in a successful attempt to gain publicity. During hostilities in 1963, 1965 and 1966 there were a few minor incidents of sabotage, some of which may have been intended as a threat of more serious action. Fears of major sabotage, however, proved groundless, seemingly because the Kurds did not wish to alienate

Iraqi or Western opinion in general and the IPC in particular, given that they hoped that the oil would one day be the major source of their own income. The most serious incident in the history of the dispute took place in 1969, when damage to installations in Kirkuk caused by mortar fire affected operations for more than a week. All in all, it may be said that the Kurds represent the least of the threats to the supply of oil from Iraq.

46. Another way in which the Kurdish revolt has touched on HMG's interests is that the deployment of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan reduced Iraq's capability to attack Kuwait or operate elsewhere in the Gulf. This consideration, however, never provided adequate grounds for contemplating active support for the Kurds, which would have jeopardised HMG's considerable political and commercial interests in Iraq and caused anxiety in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. (Since the March 1970 agreement some redeployment of the Iraqi Army has in fact taken place, giving rise to anxiety in Kuwait in particular.)

47. While HMG have in their attitude to the dispute given over-riding importance to their relations with the Iraq Government, the humanitarian consideration that arms might be used against Kurdish civilians has at times been an inhibiting factor in their policy on arms supplies to Iraq. Thus in 1963 they decided to phase the delivery of rockets, mortar bombs and other ammunition ordered by the Iraq armed forces; a similar decision was taken with regard to the supply of ammunition and rockets in 1964. But HMG have never actually refused to supply arms for this reason; other factors, particularly the possibility of weaning Iraq away from dependence on Soviet military supplies, have been considered more important.

48. Even during hostilities, HMG's policy of non-involvement did not stand in the way of cautious contact with the Kurds, with whom it was felt desirable to keep on as good terms as possible within the limitations of the situation. Thus, during the 1960's Kurdish emissaries were from time to time received by members of the FCO in London outside the office on an unofficial basis. In Baghdad, paradoxically, dealings tended to be less circumspect because many Kurds in touch with rebel groups were allowed to circulate freely and even participated in the Government. At other posts Kurdish emissaries were received if they requested interviews; letters for the Prime Minister or other Ministers were accepted and forwarded to the FCO, but it was customary not to give a written acknowledgement or send a reply.

49. The activities of Kurdish emissaries in London on occasion evoked protest from the Iraqi Ambassador - notably in 1965, when Jalal al Talabani appeared on BBC television. The question of granting visas to them was reviewed on a number of occasions: the policy was to issue visas, but sometimes to accompany their issue with a request (unenforceable) that the applicant should not take part in political or propaganda activities which might be embarrassing to HMG.

50. Despite HMG's policy of non-involvement, the Iraq Government have tended to suspect Britain of supplying the Kurds with aid in cooperation with Iran. (The fact that both are members of CENTO has lent colour to this myth.) In August 1965 the Iraqis claimed to have concrete evidence of this in the shape of arms and ammunition captured from the Kurds, but details which they later furnished to support the allegations were insufficient to permit identification of the items. HMG gave Iraq an assurance that they had not supplied arms to the Kurds.

51. HMG were reluctant to agree to numerous requests from Iraq between 1963 and 1966 that they should bring their influence to bear on the Shah to stop his aid to the Kurds, it being felt that there was a likelihood of causing irritation without affecting Iranian policy. On one occasion in 1965, however, HMG did undertake to transmit representations on behalf of the Iraqis, without entering into the merits of the complaint; and in January 1966, when a series of border incidents connected with the Kurdish war had created extreme tension between Iran and Iraq, HMG counselled moderation on both Governments at each other's request, but in a low key. Circumstances have not required the question of making representations to be considered since then.

52. The last occasion on which the Kurdish question was raised in Parliament was in December 1969, when Mr Rose asked whether HMG would seek to raise at the UN Human Rights Commission the dangers to peace in the Middle East arising from "the bombing and atrocities carried out by the Iraqi Government". The Minister of State for the FCO replied: "No. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for HMG to take the initiative in this matter at the UN. Our attitude towards action at the UN, were this subject to be raised in the Human Rights Commission, would depend on the case that is presented". This reply was in accordance with HMG's policy of non-involvement in the Kurdish dispute. It was also consistent with HMG's position that, where a consistent pattern of violations of human rights in the sense of a general policy is alleged to exist, the UN can legitimately consider the situation even though the allegation concerns an internal matter of a Member State. (Anything falling short of a consistent pattern, or a general policy, is probably covered by the domestic jurisdiction of the UN Charter (Article 2 (7)), except where an individual instance of violation is part of a general policy.) In 1963, when Mongolia requested that a charge of genocide be brought against the Iraq Government, but later dropped the request, HMG, as in 1969, did not commit themselves on the question, although it was felt within the Foreign Office at that time that Iraqi methods, including the bombing of Kurdish villages, had exceeded purely military requirements and might sustain a charge of a deliberate attempt to destroy the Kurds as a race.

53. HMG's policy of non-involvement meant the rejection of all Kurdish requests for aid while fighting was in progress. A small technical assistance programme for Iraq has been in operation since 1970. Kurds, like all Iraqi citizens, have been eligible for awards under it if they are nominated by

the Iraq Government. HMG have also presented books and equipment to Suleimaniya University. HM Embassy in Baghdad were also in touch with War on Want to see if that body could provide medical supplies through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

CONCLUSIONS

54. Some progress has been made in implementing the 1970 settlement but several crucial issues, such as the precise extent and nature of Kurdish autonomy, the revenues to be allocated to the Kurdish region, and the future of the Kurdish forces (Pish Merga) and the KDP, have yet to be resolved in detail. It is far from certain how long the settlement will survive and there are signs that Kurdish irritation at the slow pace of its implementation is growing. If this continues, there may be outbreaks of fighting severe enough, cumulatively, to render the settlement a dead letter fairly soon.

55. It is to the advantage of both the Iraq Government and the Kurds themselves that the settlement should endure. The Kurds have suffered most from the war, but Iraq as a whole has suffered from its disruptive effects and no government in Baghdad can feel that it is master of its own house when the Kurds are in rebellion. For Britain, peace in Kurdistan would remove a potential threat to the supply of oil from northern Iraq.

56. The reverse side of the coin is that with her army no longer tied up in the north of the country Iraq may be encouraged to indulge in foreign adventures - whether in Iran, in the Gulf (particularly in the period after British military withdrawal), or on the "Eastern front" with Israel. Peace in Kurdistan thus carries with it, paradoxically, a potential threat to stability in other areas of the Middle East. It is least welcome to Iran, whom it deprives of a weapon against the Iraqi régime, and Kuwait, who remains suspicious of Iraqi territorial ambitions despite Iraq's formal acceptance in 1963 of Kuwait's independence within the 1932 frontier.

57. If a permanent settlement is achieved by the Kurds in Iraq this could awaken the aspirations of the Kurdish populations of Iran and Turkey. In Iran the Kurds are comparatively quiescent at present, but in Turkey the potential threat of a Kurdish uprising was one of the reasons given for the imposition of martial law in April 1971.

58. In 1963 there were fears that the Soviet Union might become substantially involved on the side of the Iraqi Kurds. This could have menaced the security of other countries in the area as well as that of Iraq herself. But the Soviet Union chose to give priority to her relations with the Baghdad Government and the Arab world and has confined herself almost entirely to moral support for the Kurds. She undoubtedly played a part in promoting, and probably also in maintaining, the 1970 settlement.

59. During the period under review the Kurds maintained a sufficiently united front to prevent the Government imposing a military solution on them. There are, however, divisions in their ranks which are likely to become serious if a permanent peace is established. Apart from tribal rivalries, the chief division is that existing between the tribal elements led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the radically-minded urban intelligentsia represented by Jalal al Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad.

Middle East Section,

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TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DECLARATION
ISSUED BY THE IRAQI REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND
COUNCIL, 11 MARCH, 1970.

(The declaration begins with a long partisan review of the history of the Kurdish question and lists those measures taken by the Ba'athist régime in the last 18 months which, it claims, laid the foundation for the present agreement with the Kurds. What follows is a verbatim translation of the rest of the declaration.)

The Revolutionary Command Council initiated contacts with Mustafa al Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which led to an exchange of views. Both sides became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this declaration.

The Revolutionary Command Council reaffirms its determination to deepen and expand all effective measures to achieve cultural and economic development in the Kurdish area, seeking first of all to enable the Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and to ensure that they participate in a practical way in the earnest endeavours to build a homeland and the struggle to fulfil its great national aims. The Revolutionary Command Council has therefore reached the following decisions:

1. The Kurdish language shall be with Arabic the official language in areas populated by the Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic shall be taught in all schools where Kurdish is the language of instruction while Kurdish shall be taught in schools throughout the remainder of Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.
2. The participation of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between Kurds and others in filling public offices including sensitive and important posts in the State, such as Cabinet Portfolios, Army Command, etc. These have been and will remain among the important objectives which the revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. In recognising this the revolutionary Government stresses the necessity of achieving an equitable ratio in such appointments with due regard to efficiency, the proportionate distribution of the Kurdish population and the inequities which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past.
3. In view of the cultural and educational backwardness of the Kurdish population, a plan will be drawn up to make good this backwardness by:

(a) Hastening implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people and delegating to the Directorate-General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and directing radio and television programmes on Kurdish national issues.

(b) Reinstating, regardless of age, all students expelled or compelled to leave school because of the conflict in the area; failing reinstatement, to find appropriate solutions in individual cases.

(c) Building more schools in the Kurdish area. Raising the standard of education and admitting students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and scholarships in numbers proportionate to the Kurdish population.

4. In the administrative units in predominantly Kurdish areas officials shall be Kurds or persons competent in the Kurdish language provided that the required number is available. Principal officials (Governor, Qaimaqam, Director of Police, Director of Security, etc), will be appointed and immediate action will be taken to set up Government machinery in the area in consultation with the High Committee established to supervise the implementation of this statement; this to be carried out in a manner which will strengthen national unity and the stability of the area.

5. The Government recognises the right of the Kurdish people to set up their own organisations for students, young people, women and teachers which will be affiliated to the corresponding Iraqi national organisations.

6. (a) The operative period of paragraphs 1 and 2 of RCC decision No 39 of 5 August, 1968 (this granted amnesty to all those involved in the Kurdish fighting up to that date) shall be extended up to the date of issue of this statement and shall extend to all those who participated in the conflict in the Kurdish area.

(b) Workers, officials and employees, both civilian and military, shall return to service irrespective of establishment. Civilians may be employed in the Kurdish area according to requirements.

7. (a) A committee of experts shall be set up to supervise the general development of the Kurdish area and to arrange compensation for the setbacks of recent years. An adequate budget is to be allocated for this purpose. The committee in question shall come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Northern Affairs.

(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up to ensure balanced development throughout Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

SECRET

(c) Pensions shall be paid to the families of the Kurdish armed movement and others martyred during the past regrettable hostilities; pensions will also be paid to those disabled or deformed as a result of the fighting. Special legislation will be enacted to implement this on the lines of the laws currently in force.

(d) Immediate action will be taken to relieve hardship by implementing housing projects, providing appropriate aid in cash and in kind and by arranging through the High Committee for the appropriate compensation to those in need who are not covered by the provisions of the paragraphs above.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former homes. The inhabitants of villages in areas not designated for habitation and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and properly compensated.

9. The Agrarian Reform Law shall be quickly implemented in the Kurdish area and amended in such a way as to guarantee the end of the feudal system and the acquisition by the peasants of suitable plots of land. Taxes on such land which accumulated over the period of the conflict shall be waived.

10. It has been agreed that the Interim Constitution shall be amended as follows:

(a) The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities, the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

(b) The following paragraphs shall be added to Article 4 of the Constitution:

"The Kurdish language shall be, with Arabic, the official language in the Kurdish area."

(c) The above will be incorporated into the permanent Constitution.

11. The (Kurdish) broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be handed over to the Government. This is to be done when the final stages of the agreement are implemented.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic.

13. The Governorates Law shall be amended to conform with the substance of this statement.

SECRET

14. Following the publication of this statement the necessary measures shall be taken in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units in areas populated by a Kurdish majority; these areas to be decided by an official census yet to be carried out. The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the Kurdish people's exercise of all their national rights as a guarantee of their enjoying autonomy (al-hukm-adh-dhati) within the wider national unity. Until this administrative unity is achieved Kurdish national affairs shall be co-ordinated by periodic meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As autonomy is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic the exploitation of natural resources in the area will naturally fall under the jurisdiction of the Republican authorities.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a ratio corresponding with their proportion of the Iraqi population.

(The declaration concludes with general exhortations.)

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